BLAME!™

-seeker Killy in the Cuber Dungeon que

4

Tsutomu Nihei

TOKYOPOP®

弐瓶 勉

TSUTOMU NIHEI

CONTENTS

LOG－19 予備電子界 ヨビテンシカイ Backup Cyberspace

LOG－20 禁圧解除 キンアツカイシヨ Limiter Release

LOG－21 混生体 ハイブリット Hybrid

LOG－22 東亜重工 トウアシユウコウToha Heavy Industries

LOG－23 電基騎士 テンキキシ Electroknight

LOG－24 第8空洞 THE EIGHTH CAVE

BLAME!

Volume Four

by Tsutomu Nihei

TOKYOPOP®

HAMBURG // LONDON // LOS ANGELES // TOKYO

BLAME! Vol. 4

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ISBN: 1-59532-837-8

First TOKYOPOP printing: May 2006
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Printed in Canada

LOG.19 — Backup Cyberspace

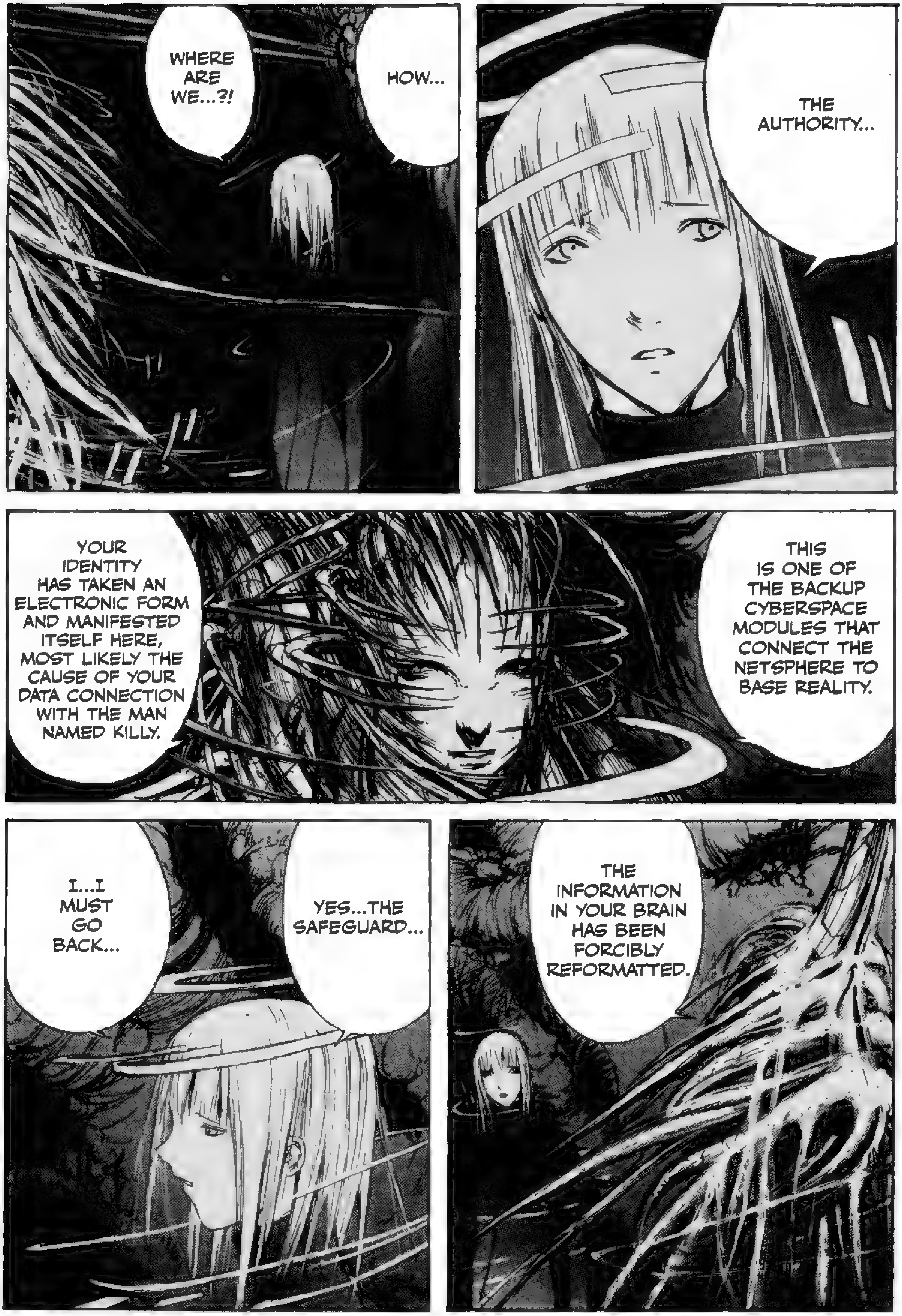
GAGZIN
BOOOM

ZLSHH
ズ
BLAMM

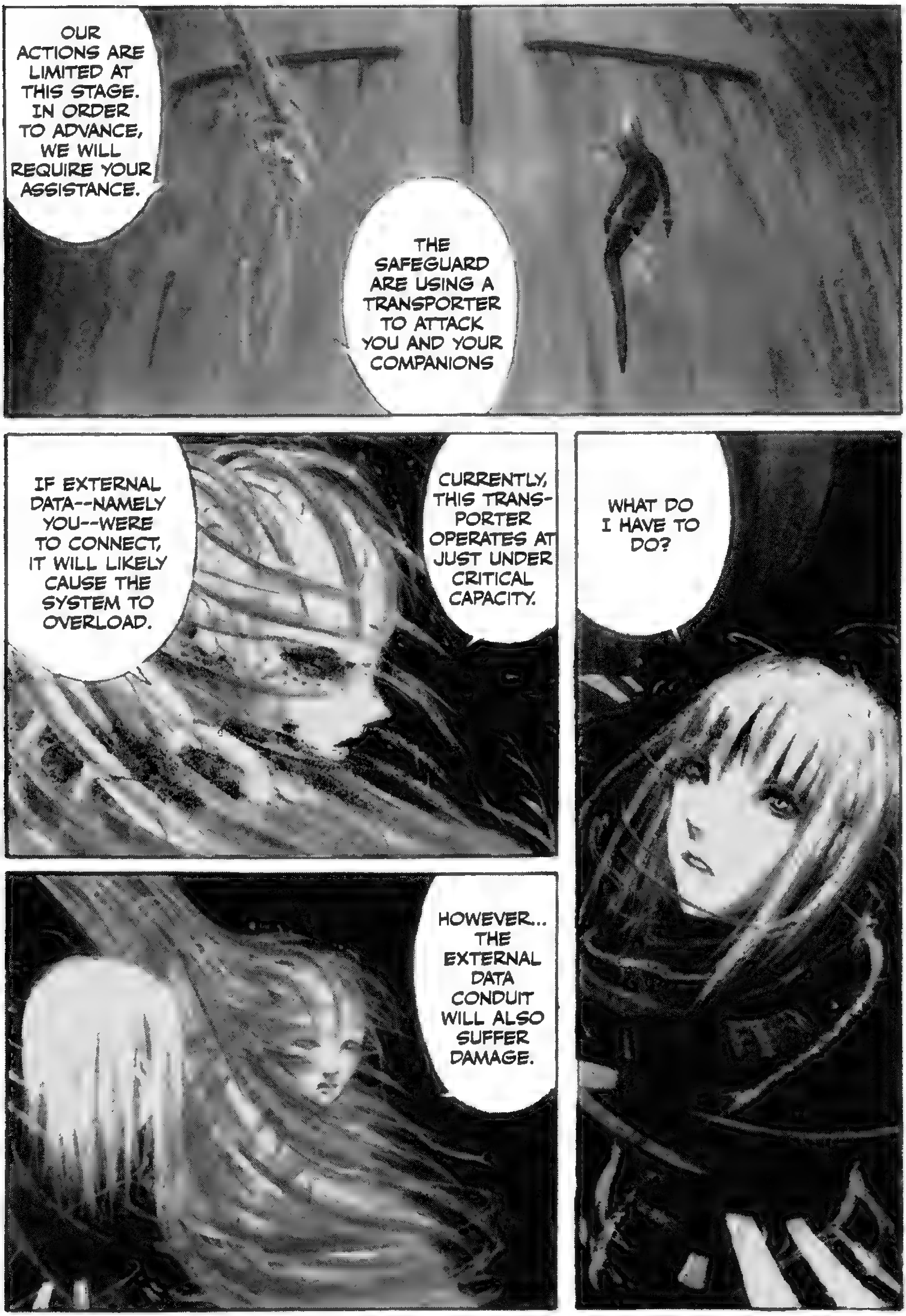
CRUSSHH
CRUNCH
CIBO! WAKE UP! THAT THING'S GOING TO KILL EVERYONE!

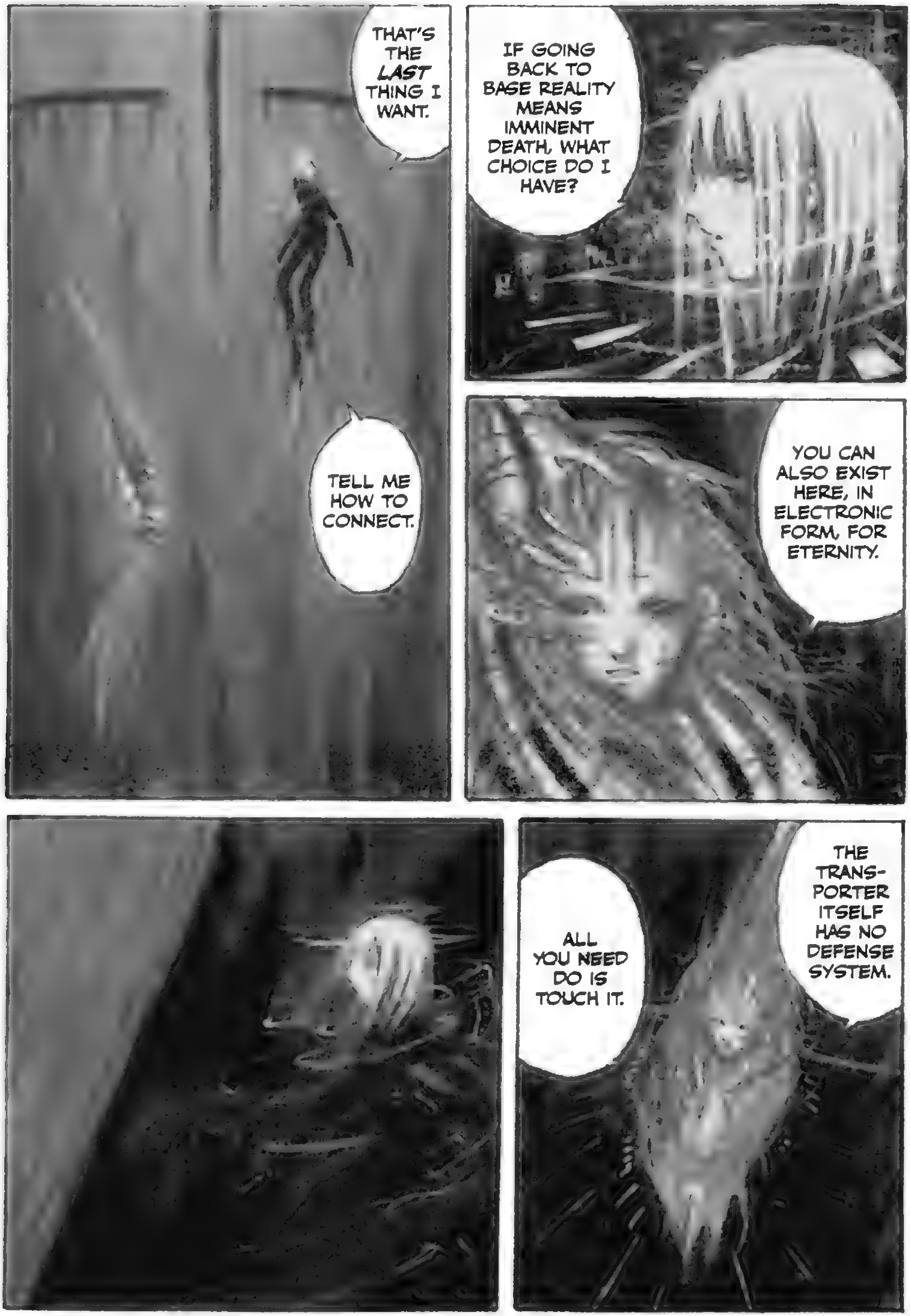
ZZZRT
ZZT-ZT-ZZT-ZZT

VWUMM


THE AUTHORITY...
HOW...
WHERE ARE WE...?!
THIS IS ONE OF THE BACKUP CYBERSPACE MODULES THAT CONNECT THE NETSPHERE TO BASE REALITY.
YOUR IDENTITY HAS TAKEN AN ELECTRONIC FORM AND MANIFESTED ITSELF HERE, MOST LIKELY THE CAUSE OF YOUR DATA CONNECTION WITH THE MAN NAMED KILLY.
THE INFORMATION IN YOUR BRAIN HAS BEEN FORCIBLY REFORMATTED.
YES...THE SAFEGUARD...
I...I MUST GO BACK...

YOUR BRAIN IN BASE REALITY WILL CEASE FUNCTIONING IN A FEW NANO-SECONDS.
IF YOU RETURN NOW, YOUR IDENTITY WILL BE ERADICATED.
BUT THERE IS STILL TIME. IN THE ACCELERATED MEDIUM OF THIS BACKUP CYBER-SPACE, TIME BECOMES SUBJECTIVE, AND THEREFORE MALLEABLE.
AND THERE IS A METHODICAL PLAN TO STOP THE SAFEGUARD HERE.
WHIRRR
HUH?!
GYUN


OUR ACTIONS ARE LIMITED AT THIS STAGE. IN ORDER TO ADVANCE, WE WILL REQUIRE YOUR ASSISTANCE.
THE SAFEGUARD ARE USING A TRANSPORTER TO ATTACK YOU AND YOUR COMPANIONS
CURRENTLY, THIS TRANSPORTER OPERATES AT JUST UNDER CRITICAL CAPACITY.
IF EXTERNAL DATA--NAMELY YOU--WERE TO CONNECT, IT WILL LIKELY CAUSE THE SYSTEM TO OVERLOAD.
HOWEVER... THE EXTERNAL DATA CONDUIT WILL ALSO SUFFER DAMAGE.
WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?


IF GOING BACK TO BASE REALITY MEANS IMMINENT DEATH, WHAT CHOICE DO I HAVE?
YOU CAN ALSO EXIST HERE, IN ELECTRONIC FORM, FOR ETERNITY.
THAT'S THE *LAST* THING I WANT.
TELL ME HOW TO CONNECT.
THE TRANSPORTER ITSELF HAS NO DEFENSE SYSTEM.
ALL YOU NEED DO IS TOUCH IT.

WWAM
THMM

BLAM
FWITCH
BOOM

ZZAP

BLAM!
ドン
RUMBLE
ゴゴ
DUUM
ドサ

KYUIIIIII

SHLURCH
FWIRR
WHU-WHU-WHU-WHUM

BLAM!
BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
ドドドド

FWUWURR
CRASHH
FWTHUMPUMPBUM
CRASH

BWOOOSH
SHHHHH

WHAT THE... HELL IS GOING ON...?
SHUU

I SEE THE ENTRANCE, POPS!
MOVE THIS STUFF!
WE CAN'T UNLOCK IT UNLESS WE CAN GET TO THE HOLE IN THE MIDDLE!

IT IS GOING WELL, BUT WE'RE NOT DONE YET. CONTINUE.
AUTHORITY... I WANT TO ASK YOU SOMETHING.

IS KILLY A SAFEGUARD?
……

SCRULCHH

HE IS... NOT...KILLY IS THE SECRET AGENT OF A PRE-SAFEGUARD... SYSTEM...
RIIP

BLSSSHHHH!

FSHHUMM
LOG.19@END

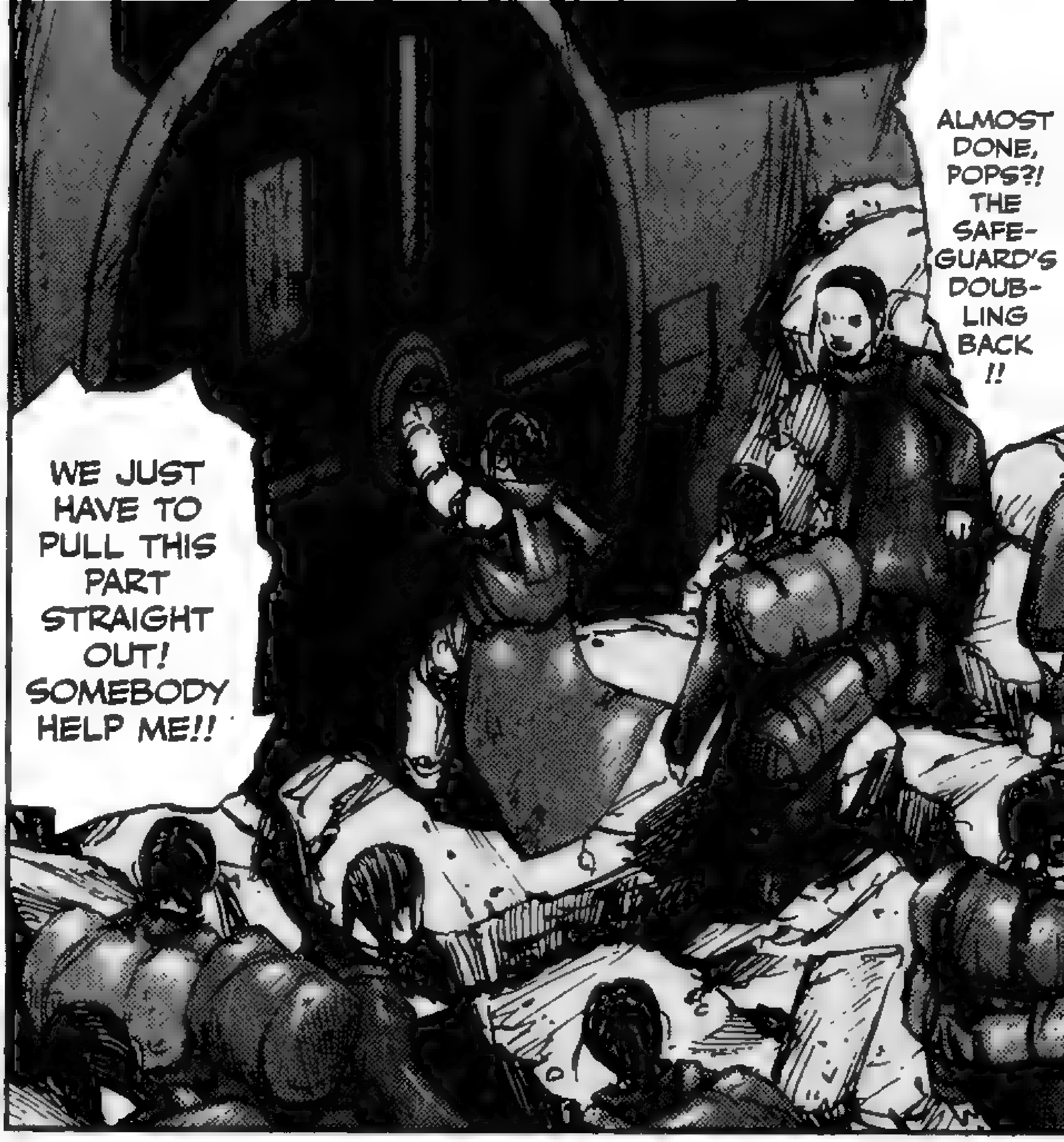
LOG.20 – Limiter Release

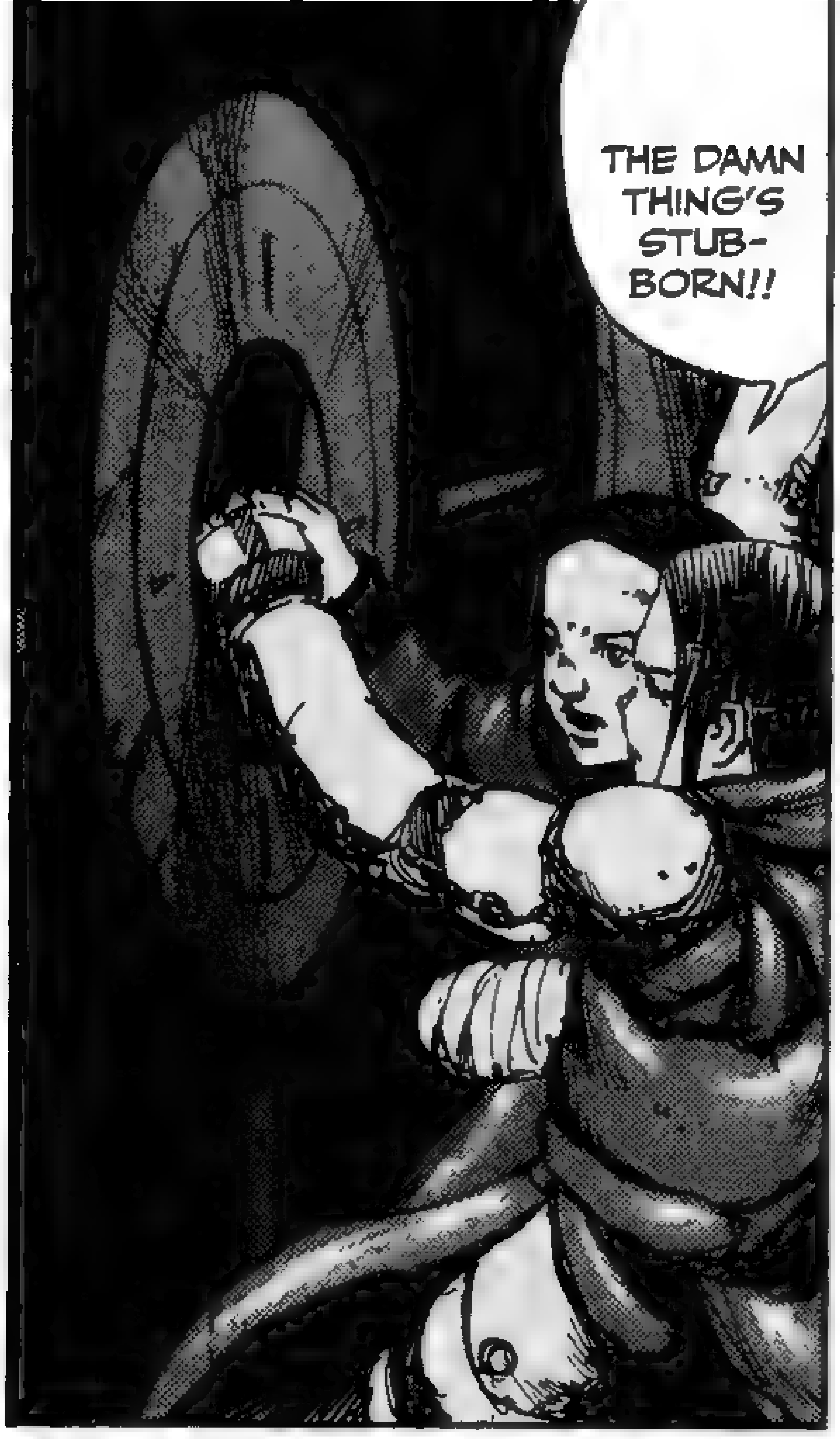
PIP
PLAM
SHLURRT

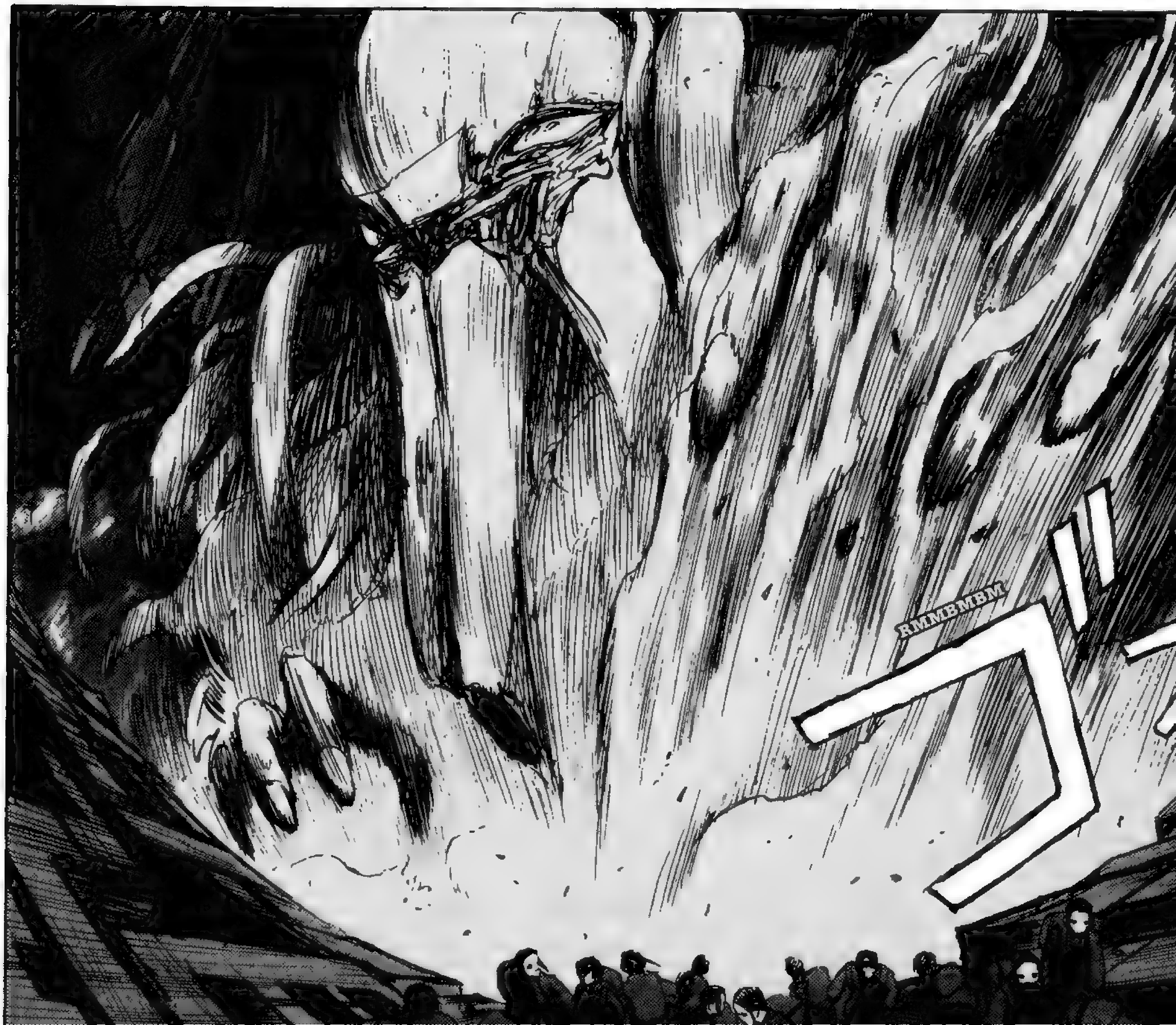
BRRRPOOMM
RIP

DJZTT
BZZZT DZT DZAAT
FWUM
FSH

PRRK
HISSSS


ALMOST DONE, POPS?! THE SAFEGUARD'S DOUBLING BACK!!
WE JUST HAVE TO PULL THIS PART STRAIGHT OUT! SOMEBODY HELP ME!!


THE DAMN THING'S STUBBORN!!


RMMBMBM

DRUU-CRIK-CRISH
CRUMBLE

BSHHUMM
TSSRK
TSSRK
KRUNK

BLAM BLAM
BWOOM

WHOOSH
GLERK

BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
LET'S GO, ZURU!

DAMN!
FWOOOSH
BOO-BOOM

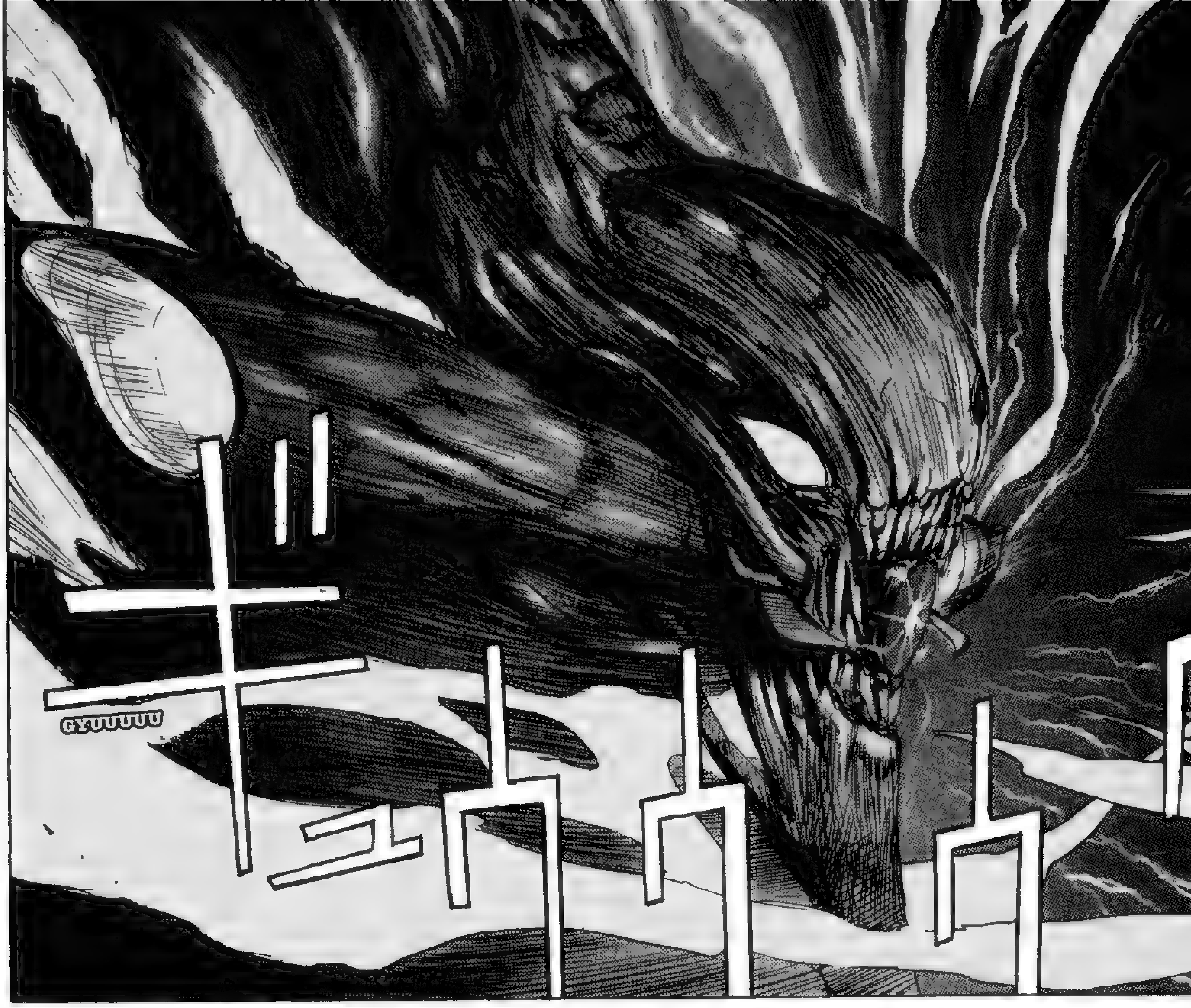
GLARE

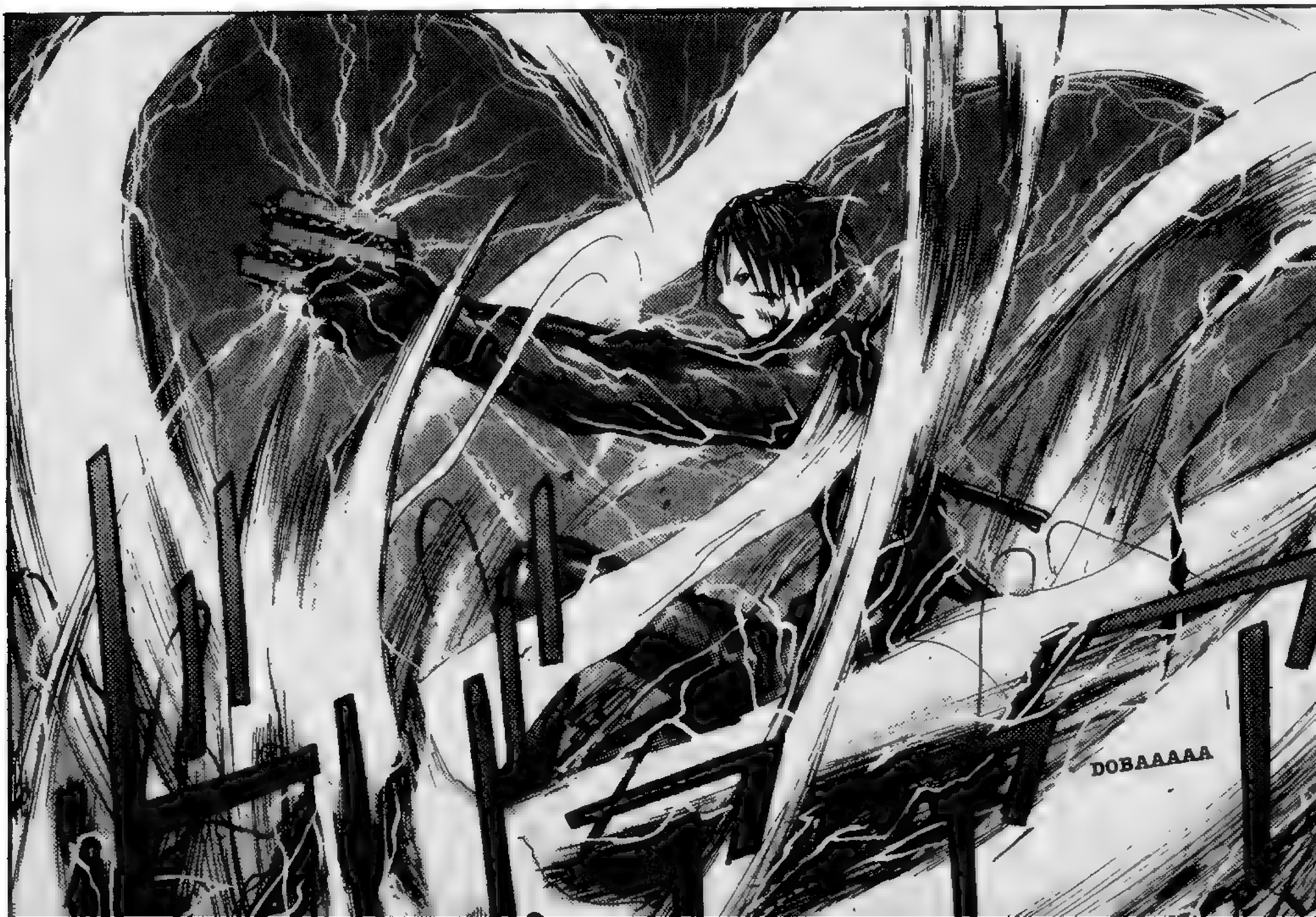
HUFF
HUFF
SHJUNK
CLICK CLICK
LIMIT CANCEL
LIMITER RELEASED
ATTENTION DANGER ATTENZIONE!
LIMIT CANCEL
ABNORMAL EMISSION LEVEL
LIMIT OFF ⚠ 非通常射出⚠
ATTENZIONE!
LIMIT CANCEL

YANK
RUMMBLE

RRRRR
PING
PING
PING
WHOOSH

CHA-CHK
KSHUNK
KYUIIII


ギュウウウ
GYUUUUU


DOBAAAAA

KYUIIII
KA-CHK

ゴゴゴゴ
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE

ボオ

ズズ

CRMB

ビュウゥ

POOR BOY. THEY LEFT YOU BEHIND.

LOG.20@END

KA-CHK
WAIT!!!

CIBO...

IT'S STRANGE, LIVING IN A BODY WITHOUT ORGANS.
IT'S GOING TO TAKE ME SOME TIME TO GET USED TO IT.
ARE THEY ALL INSIDE?

I THINK SO...
THE ENTRANCE WAS OPEN WHEN I GOT HERE.
WELL, LET'S GO IN AND SEE.

ALL THE AUTHORITY TOLD ME WAS THAT THE BACKUP CYBERSPACE WAS SEPARATE FROM THE NETSPHERE.
IT DIDN'T REALLY SAY ANYTHING ABOUT THE NET TERMINAL GENES.

BUT...

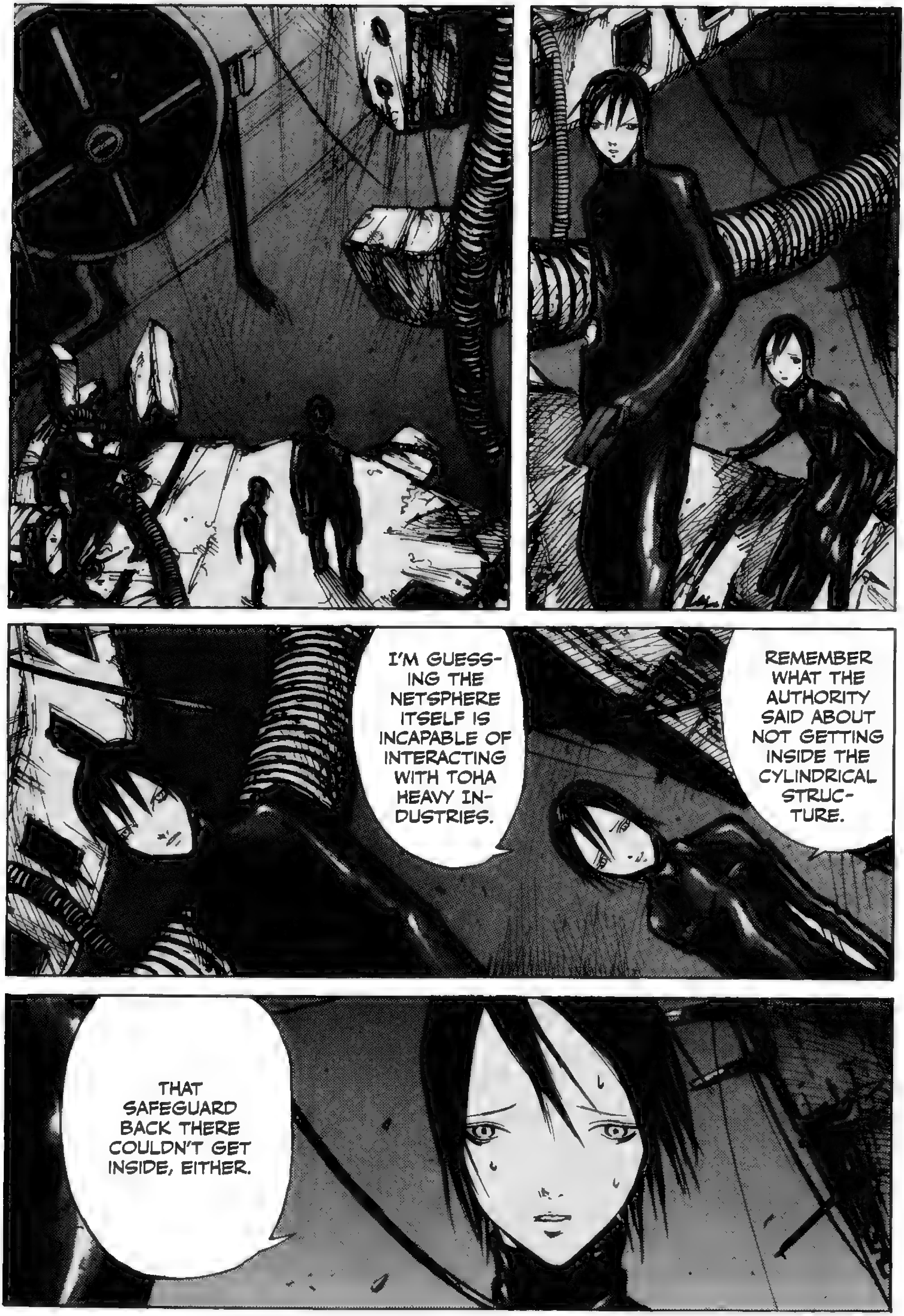
?!
BOHHH
GGGRR
ガアアア
CHJJIN

BOOOOM
ゴォオオ
BOOOMMM
オオオ
THE DOOR!!

SNATCH
BOOOM
ドオ

GA-SHUNK
CLICK
SMASH

FLUP
FSSSS

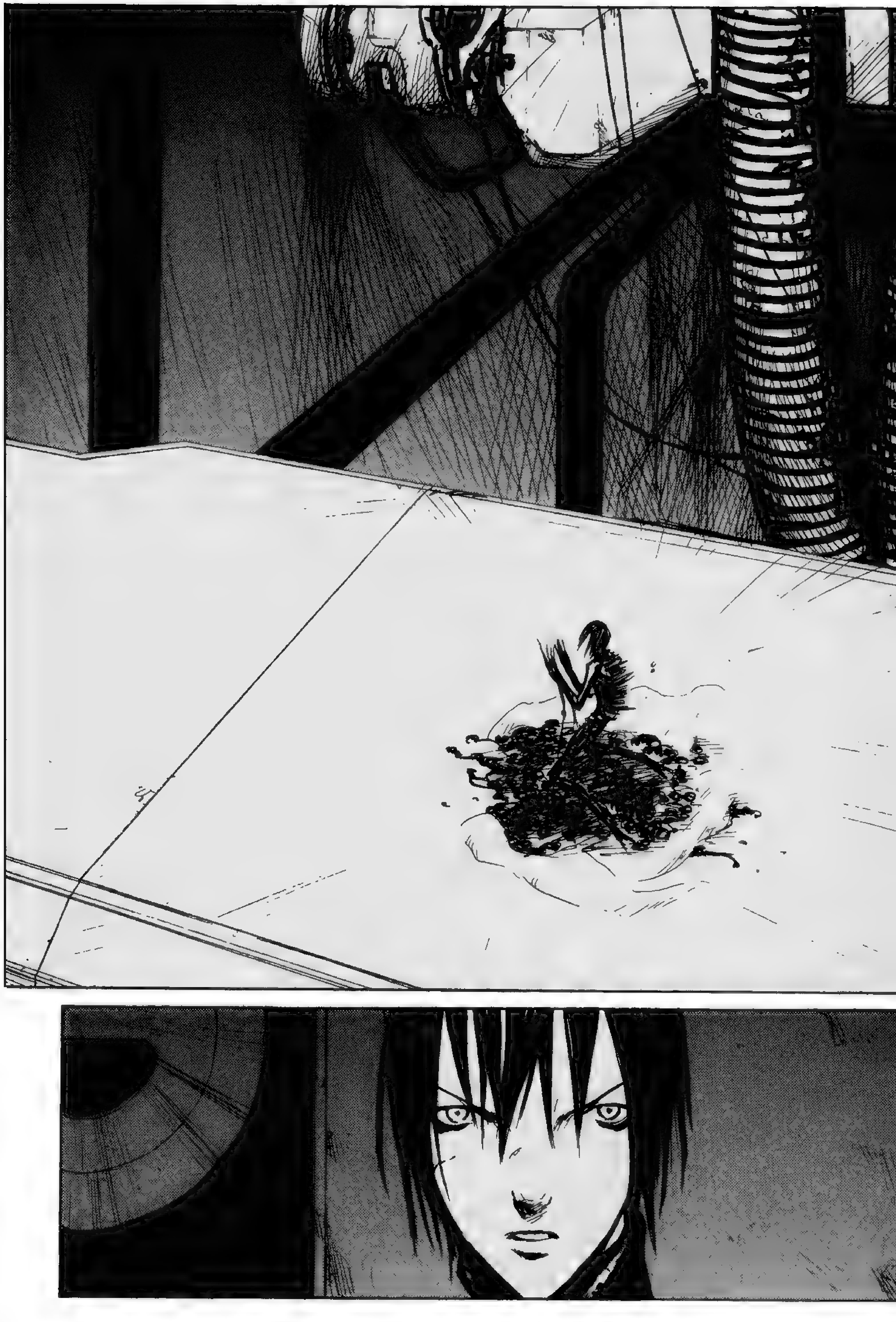

I'M GUESSING THE NETSPHERE ITSELF IS INCAPABLE OF INTERACTING WITH TOHA HEAVY INDUSTRIES.
REMEMBER WHAT THE AUTHORITY SAID ABOUT NOT GETTING INSIDE THE CYLINDRICAL STRUCTURE.
THAT SAFEGUARD BACK THERE COULDN'T GET INSIDE, EITHER.

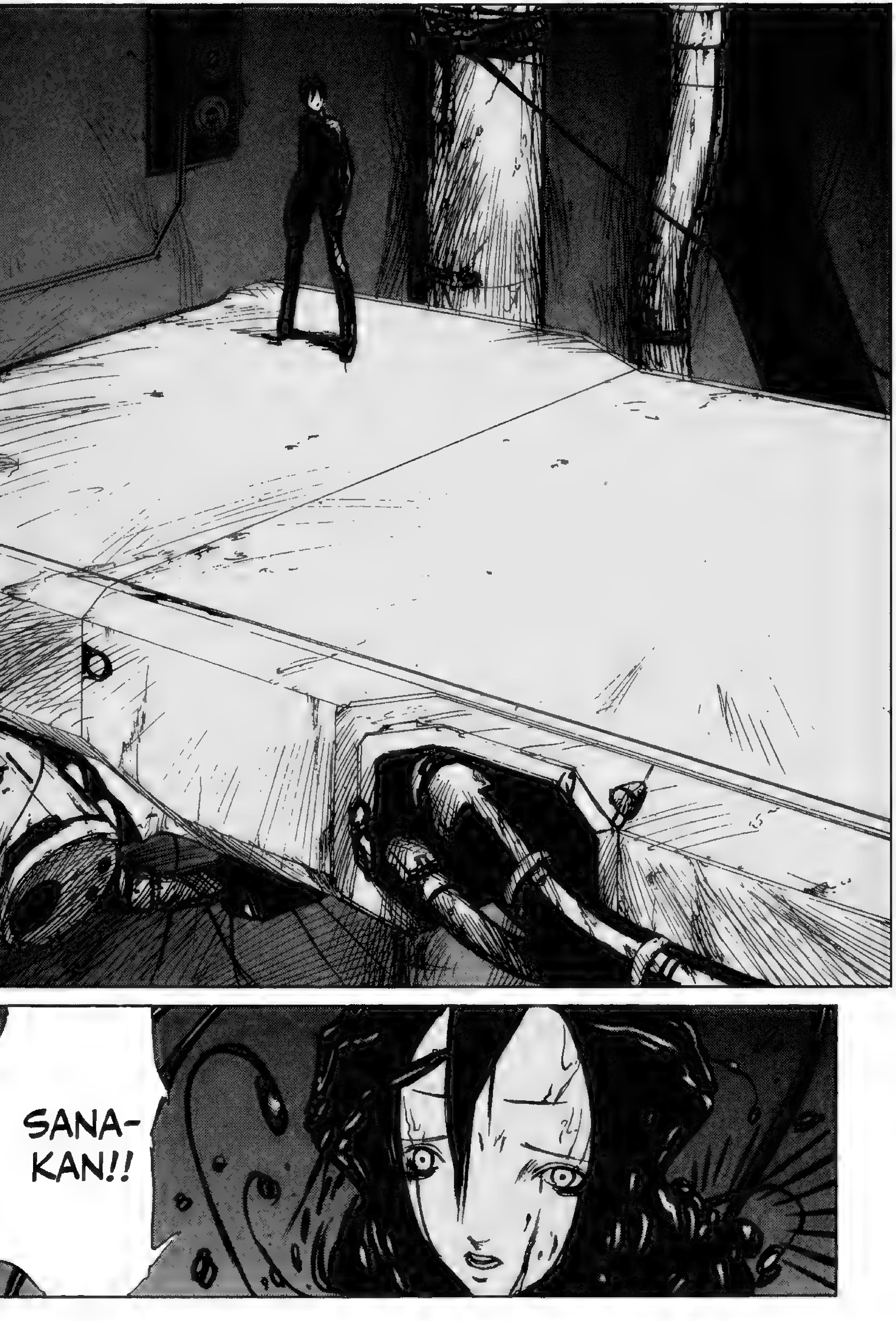
ABOVE US.
IT'S NOT WORKING. THE SAFEGUARD MUST HAVE JAMMED IT.
WE'LL JUST HAVE TO LOOK FOR ANOTHER ENTRANCE.
LET'S GET MOVING.
DO YOU SEE SOME-THING?

THE ELECTRO-MAG WAVES ARE STRONG HERE.
THERE'S A MEGA-STRUCTURE JUST ABOVE US.

A.F.

TOHA HEAVY
INDUSTRIES




SANA-KAN!!

SLAM
LURCH
KILLY!!

SLERRRCH
ドシュウウ

CRUNK
KASHHHING
TOHA HEAVY INDUSTRIES
CRUNK
CRRRUM
ガコン
TOHA HEAVY INDUSTRIES

RUMBLE
THUD
TOHA HEAVY INDUSTRIES
SHHUNK
WHIRRRRR

TOHA HEAVY
INDUSTRIES

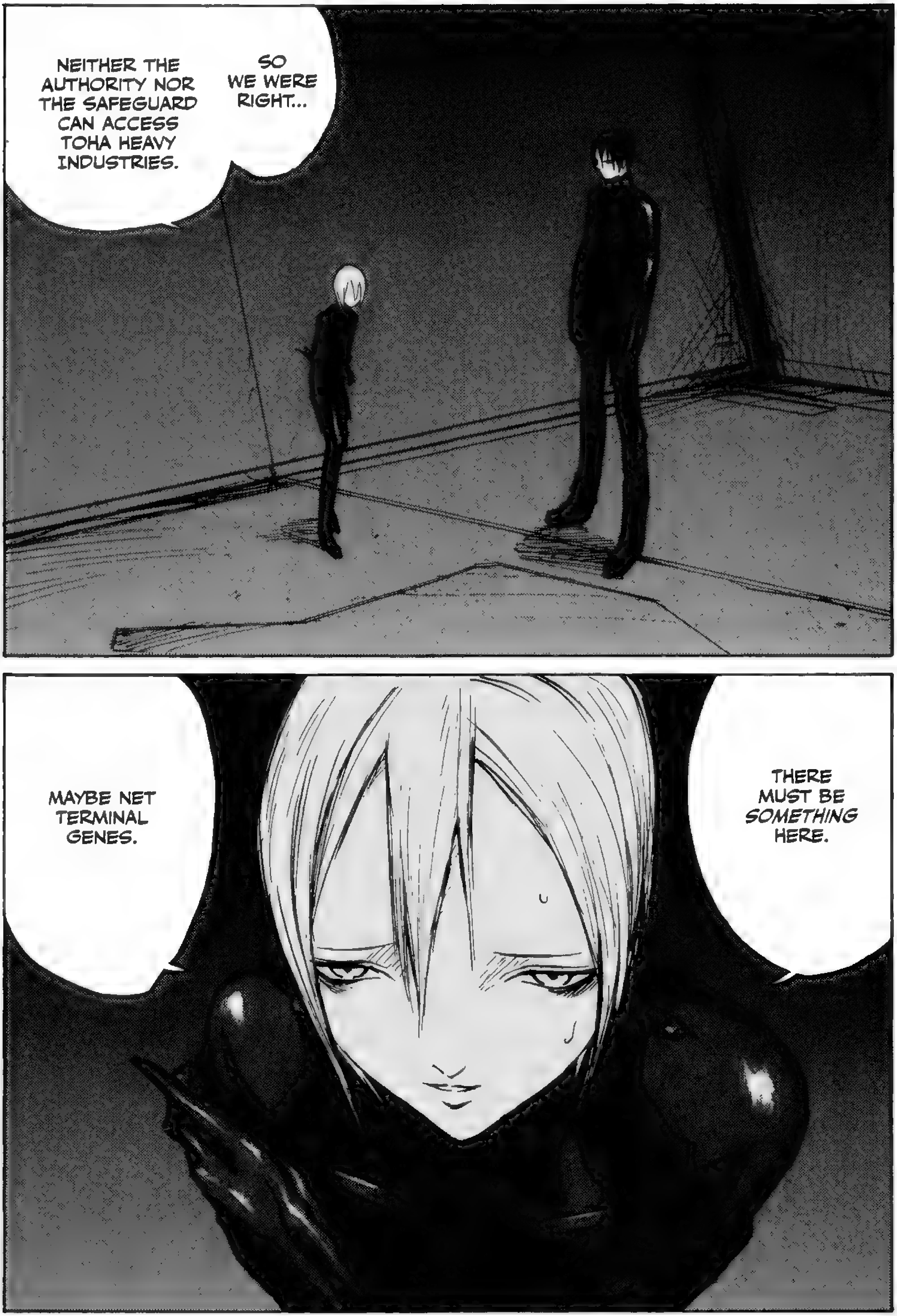
BZZRRT
KRRSHUNK

LOG.21@END

LOG. 22 - Toha Heavy Industries

TWITCH

LET'S GO.
I CAN WALK NOW.
THE SAFEGUARD SIGNAL GETS STRONGER THE CLOSER WE GET TO THE MEGASTRUCTURE.
BUT THE MOMENT WE ENTERED TOHA, SANA-KAN'S CONSCIOUSNESS SIMPLY VANISHED.

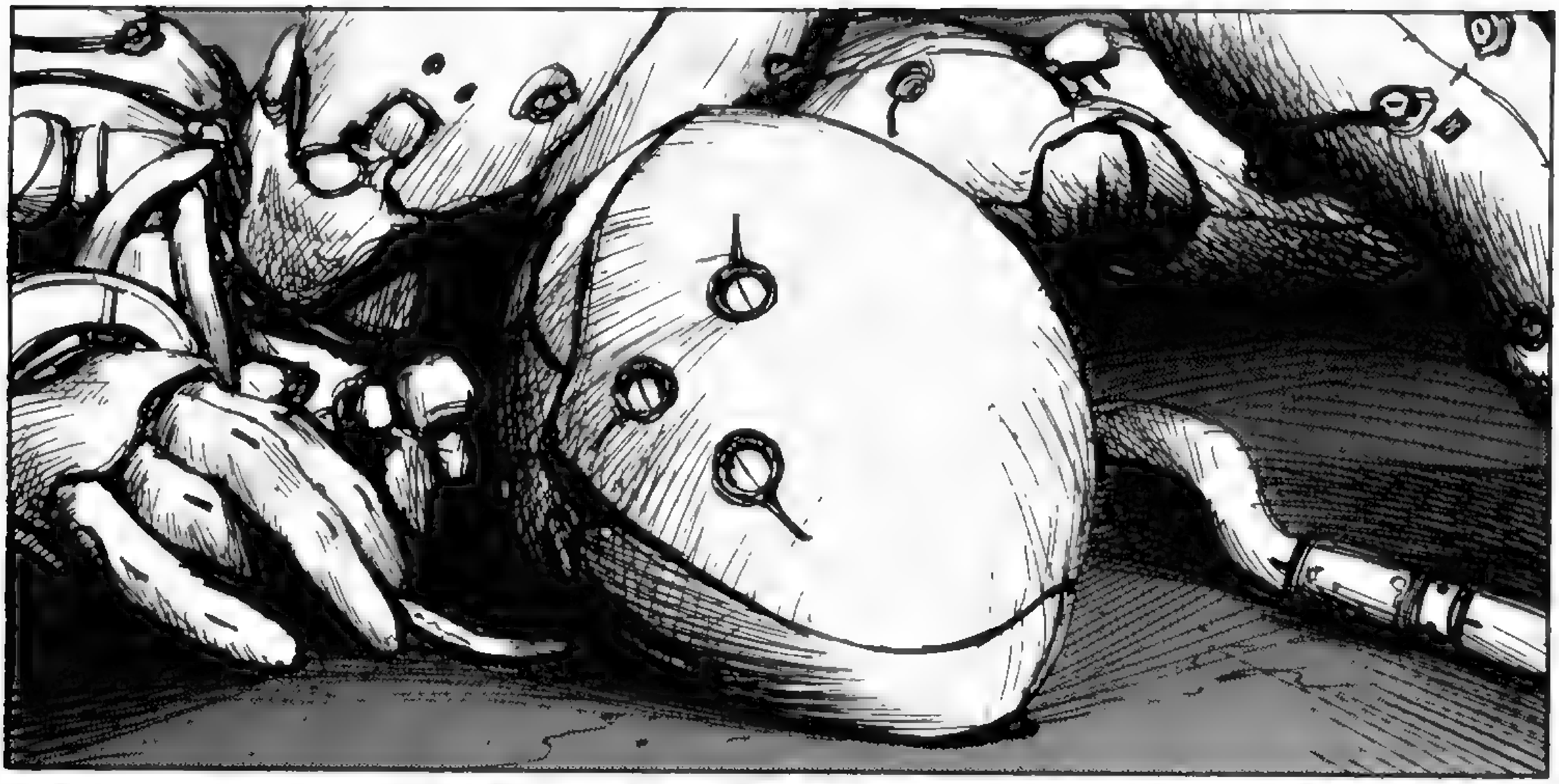

SO WE WERE RIGHT...
NEITHER THE AUTHORITY NOR THE SAFEGUARD CAN ACCESS TOHA HEAVY INDUSTRIES.
THERE MUST BE *SOMETHING* HERE.
MAYBE NET TERMINAL GENES.

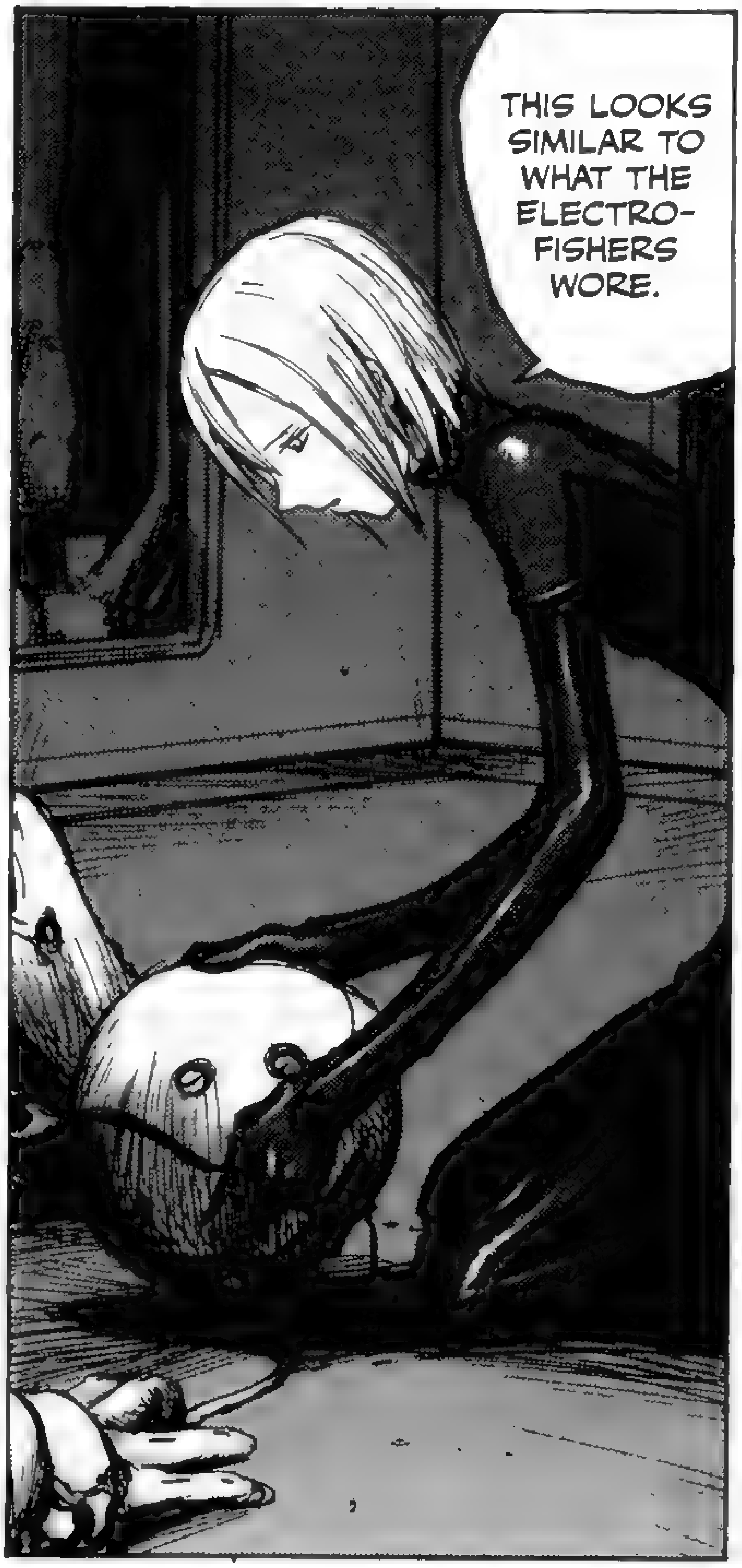
IS YOUR ARM ALL RIGHT, KILLY?
YES.

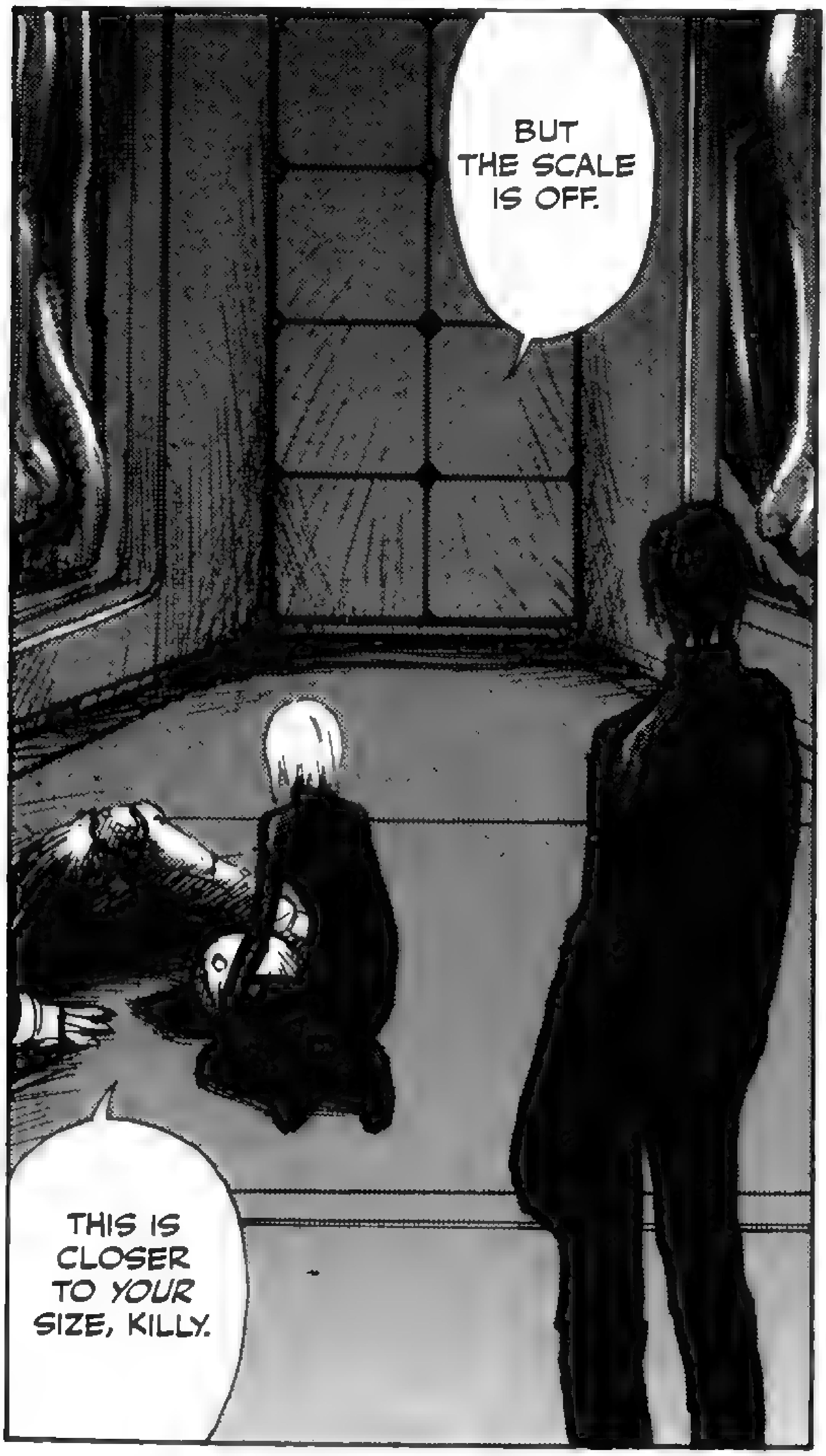
CLUNK
BE CAREFUL. GRAVITY IN HERE HAS BEEN RE-ORIENTED.

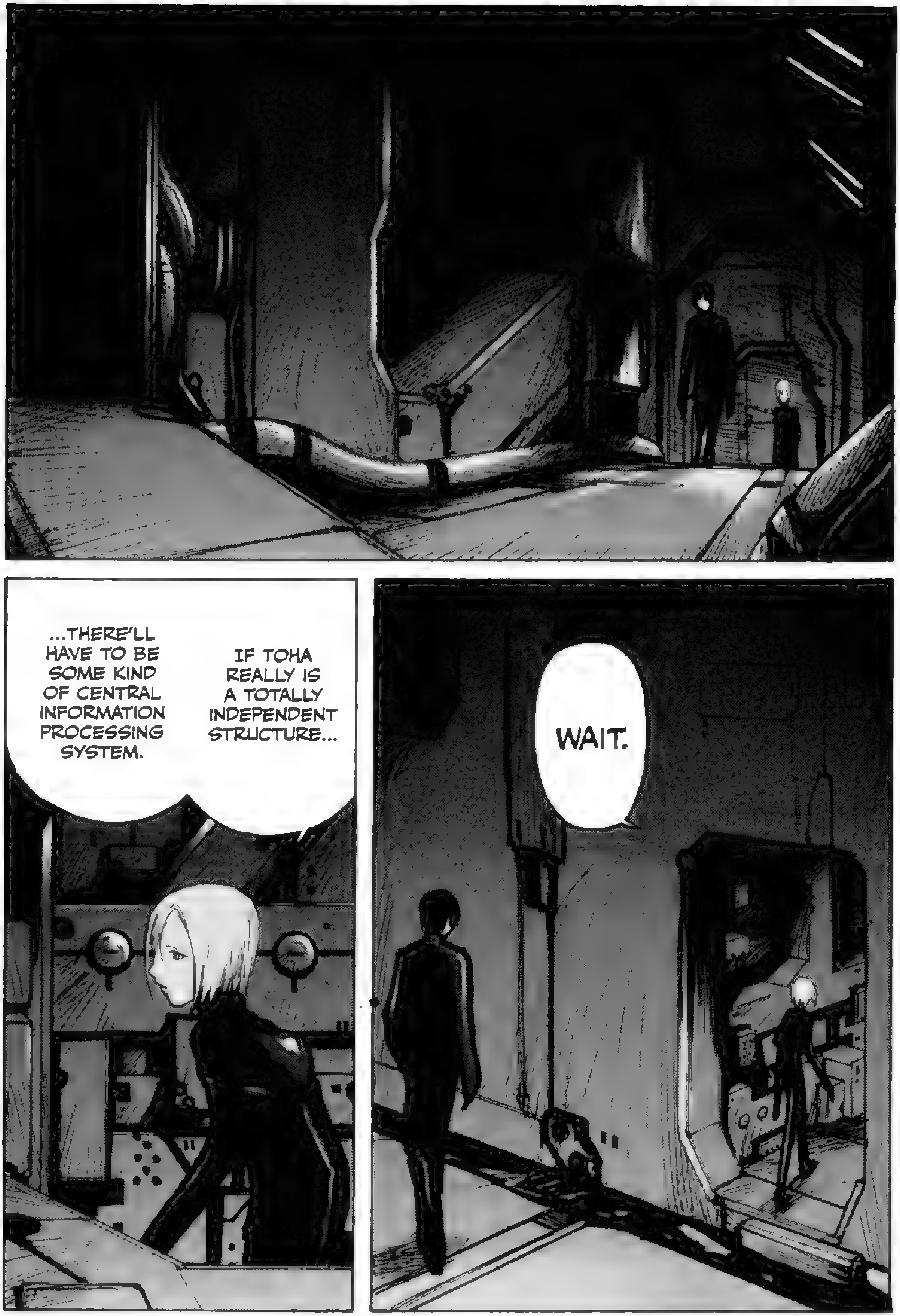
SHWUM
I'M WORRIED ABOUT ZURU AND THE OTHERS.

THERE MIGHT BE A DISPLAY MAP AROUND HERE.
4
4




THIS LOOKS SIMILAR TO WHAT THE ELECTRO-FISHERS WORE.

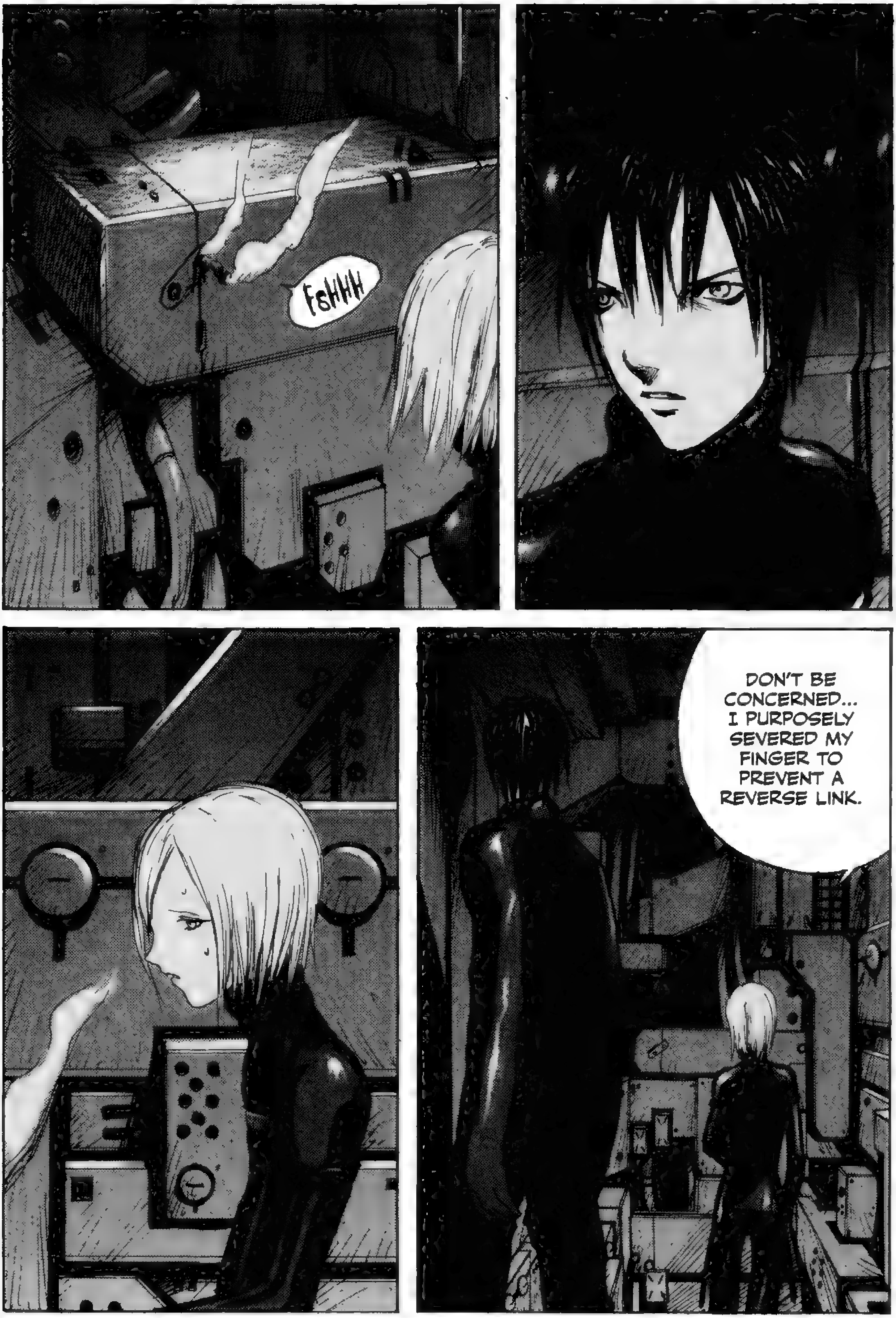

BUT THE SCALE IS OFF.
THIS IS CLOSER TO *YOUR* SIZE, KILLY.


WAIT.
IF TOHA REALLY IS A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT STRUCTURE...
...THERE'LL HAVE TO BE SOME KIND OF CENTRAL INFORMATION PROCESSING SYSTEM.

MAYBE WE CAN CONNECT TO THAT.
SHUWA

I'M IN.
THIS IS THE WATER PURIFICATION SYSTEM.
BUT FROM HERE, I CAN GET INTO...

RRRIP


FSHHH
DON'T BE CONCERNED... I PURPOSELY SEVERED MY FINGER TO PREVENT A REVERSE LINK.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...
TOHA'S CENTRAL PROCESSOR IS AN A.I.... IT HAS A PERSONALITY.
WHAT WERE THEY THINKING, GIVING A CONTROL SYSTEM SENTIENCE?
IT'S PROBABLY STILL TRYING TO KILL ME.
I MAY HAVE ALREADY SUFFERED SOME KIND OF MENTAL DAMAGE.

I'M LEARNING HOW TO USE THIS BODY, BIT BY BIT.
……
THIS WAY.
I AT LEAST MANAGED TO DOWNLOAD A MAP OF THE AREA.

ゴォン
ゴォン
GLUNG GLUNG
CLUNK

I THINK THIS IS SOME KIND OF EMERGENCY BARRIER.
WE USED SOMETHING SIMILAR AT THE CORPORATION.
THERE HAS TO BE A REASON WHY THE PASSAGE WAS SEALED OFF.

WOW, IT EVEN CRACKED THE FLOOR OF THE CORRIDOR. PRETTY THOROUGH JOB.
I GUESS OUR ONLY CHOICE IS TO FIND ANOTHER PATH.
SKREEEEEE
EEEEEEEE

EEEEEEE
EEE
EEEEE
TING!
GA-SHUNK
ガン

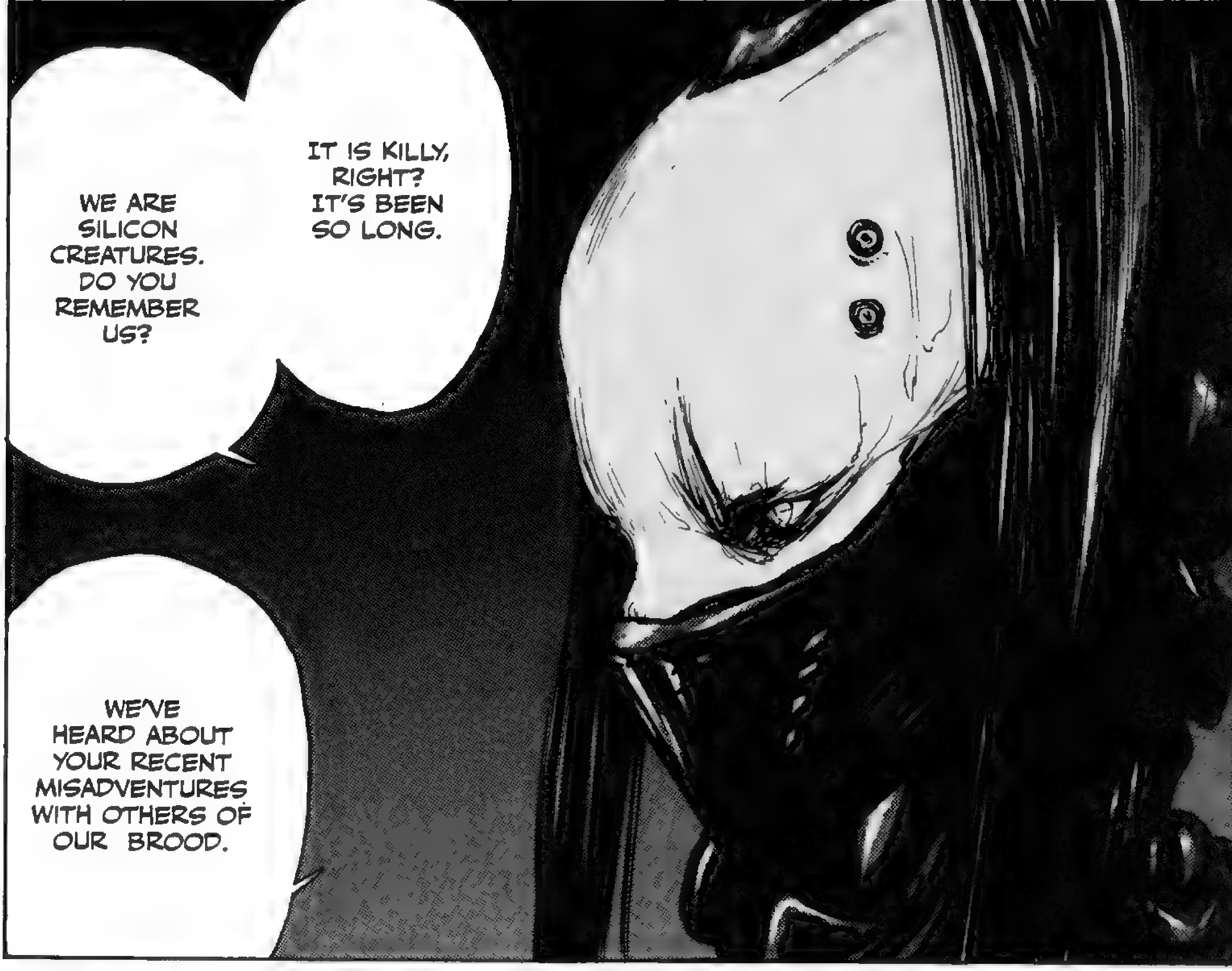
GUNG

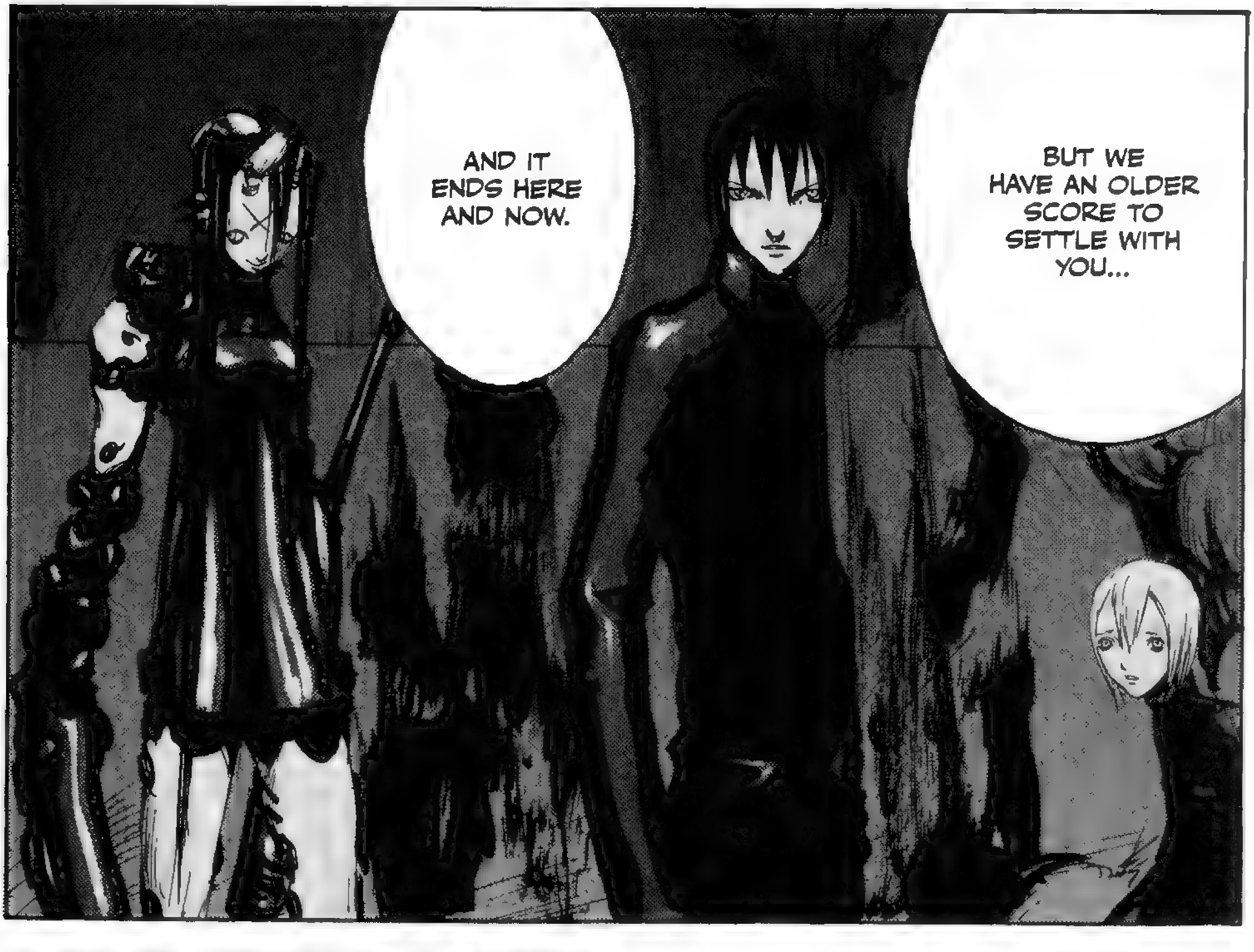
A SAFE-GUARD...?!
BUT...NO... THAT CAN'T BE...
No.14 51:28.09
DISPLAY: SILICON CREATURE
!!

KILLY!!!
CLICK

CLICK
CLICK
?!

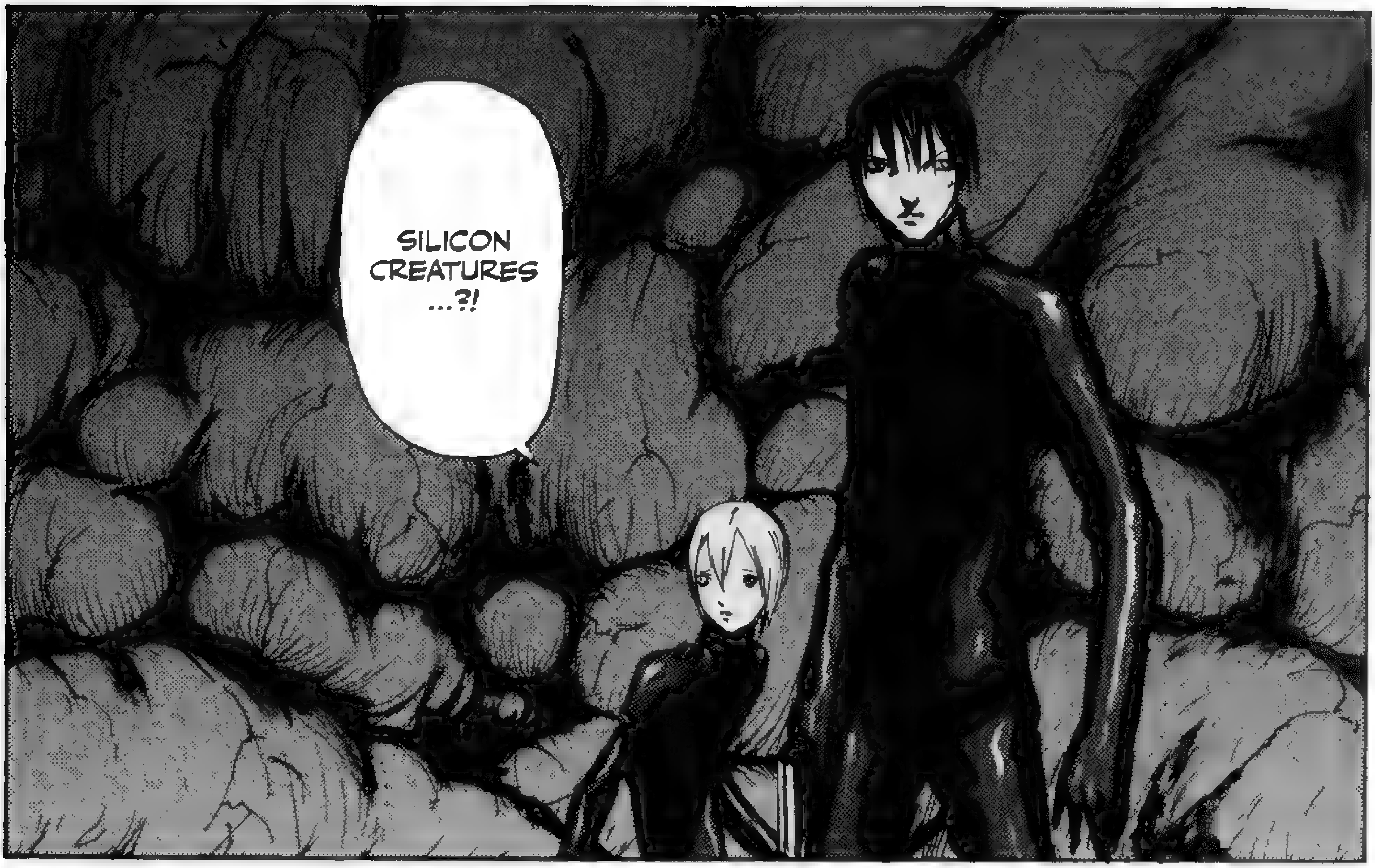
SCRAPE
THE WEAPONS OF THE SAFEGUARD ARE NOT OPERATIONAL WITHIN THE CONFINES OF TOHA HEAVY INDUSTRIES.

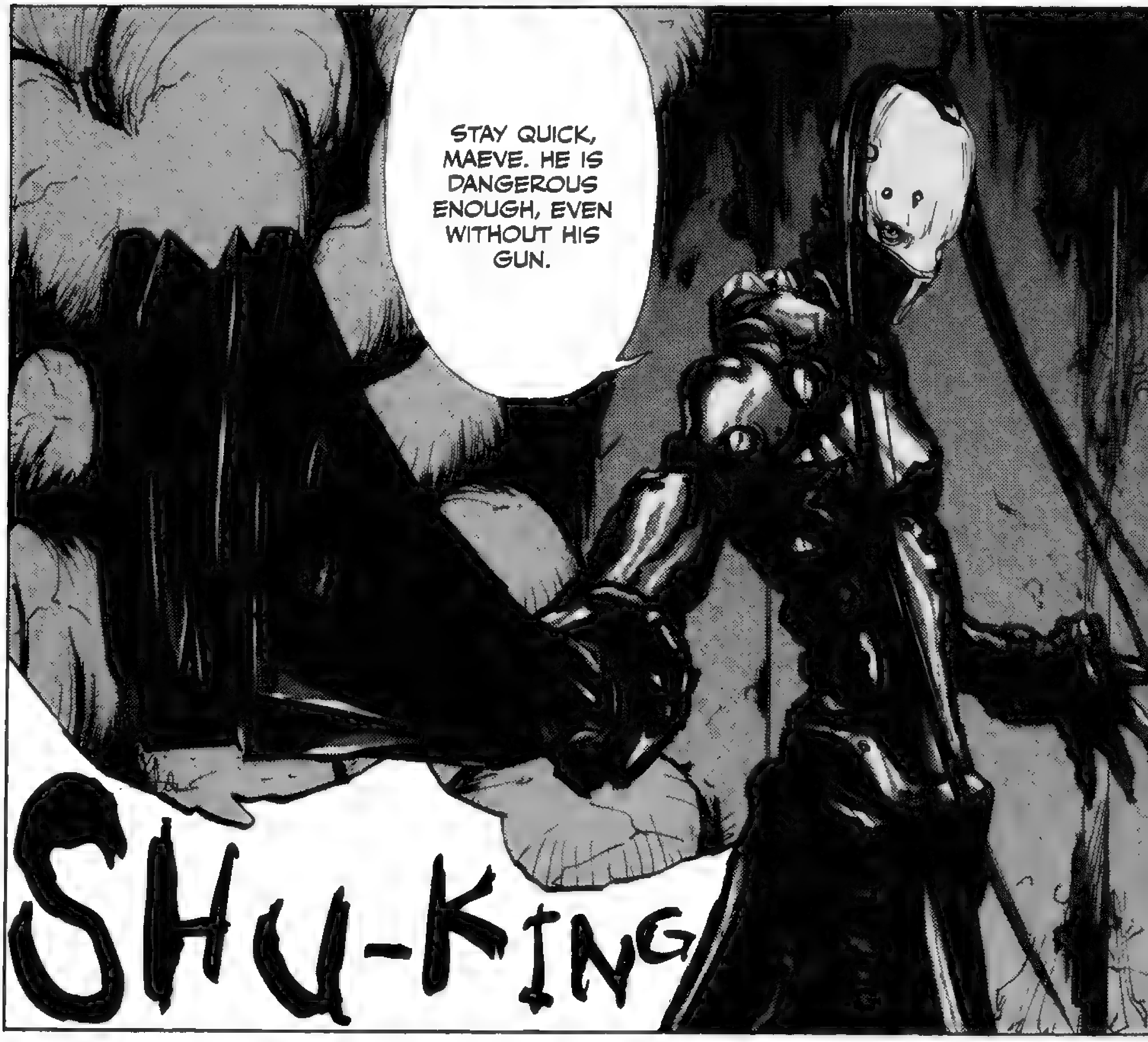

IT IS KILLY, RIGHT? IT'S BEEN SO LONG.
WE ARE SILICON CREATURES. DO YOU REMEMBER US?
WE'VE HEARD ABOUT YOUR RECENT MISADVENTURES WITH OTHERS OF OUR BROOD.

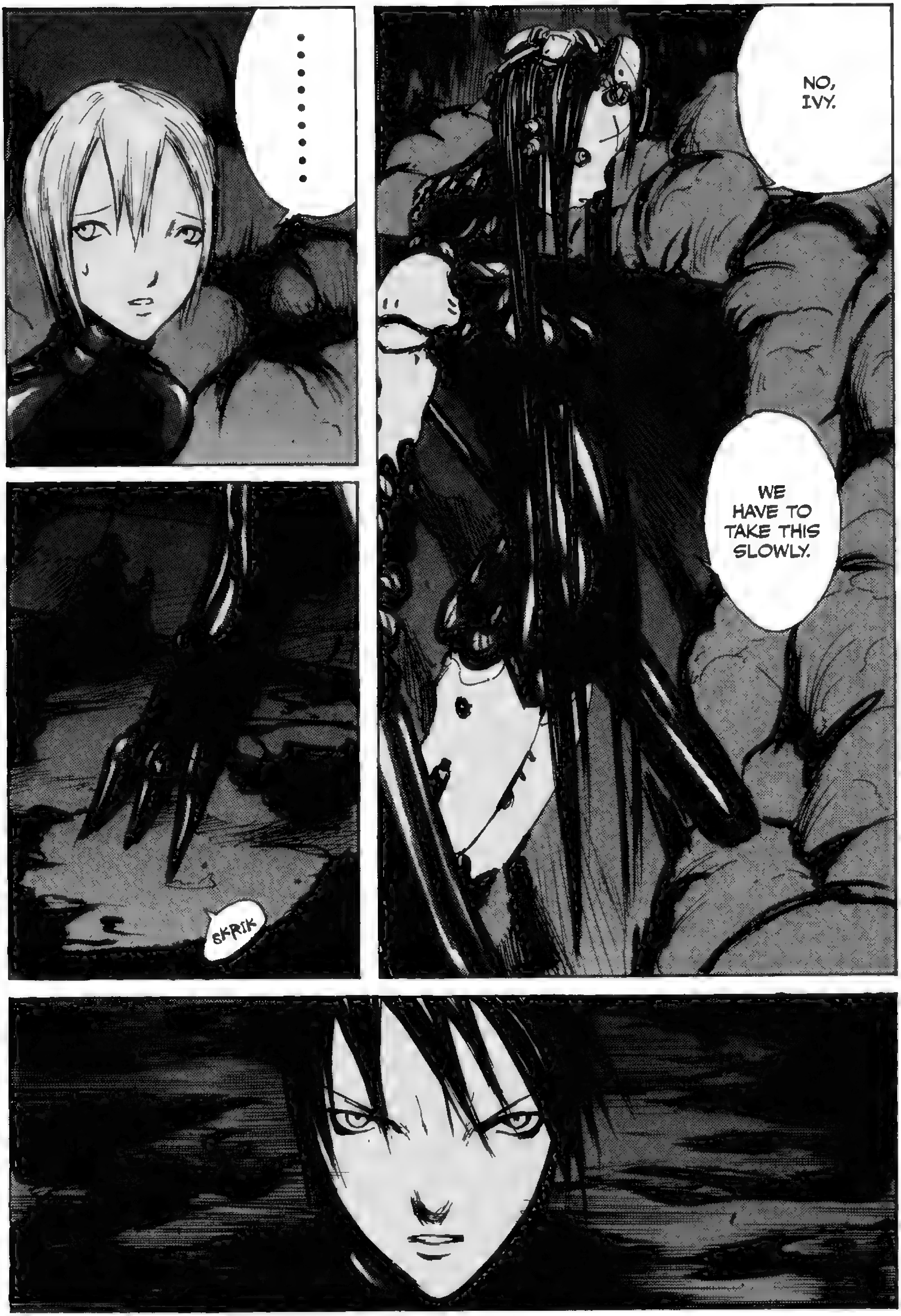

BUT WE HAVE AN OLDER SCORE TO SETTLE WITH YOU...
AND IT ENDS HERE AND NOW.

LOG.22@END

LOG.23 - Electroknight


SILICON CREATURES ...?!


STAY QUICK, MAEVE. HE IS DANGEROUS ENOUGH, EVEN WITHOUT HIS GUN.
SHU-KING


NO, IVY.
WE HAVE TO TAKE THIS SLOWLY.
....
SKRIK

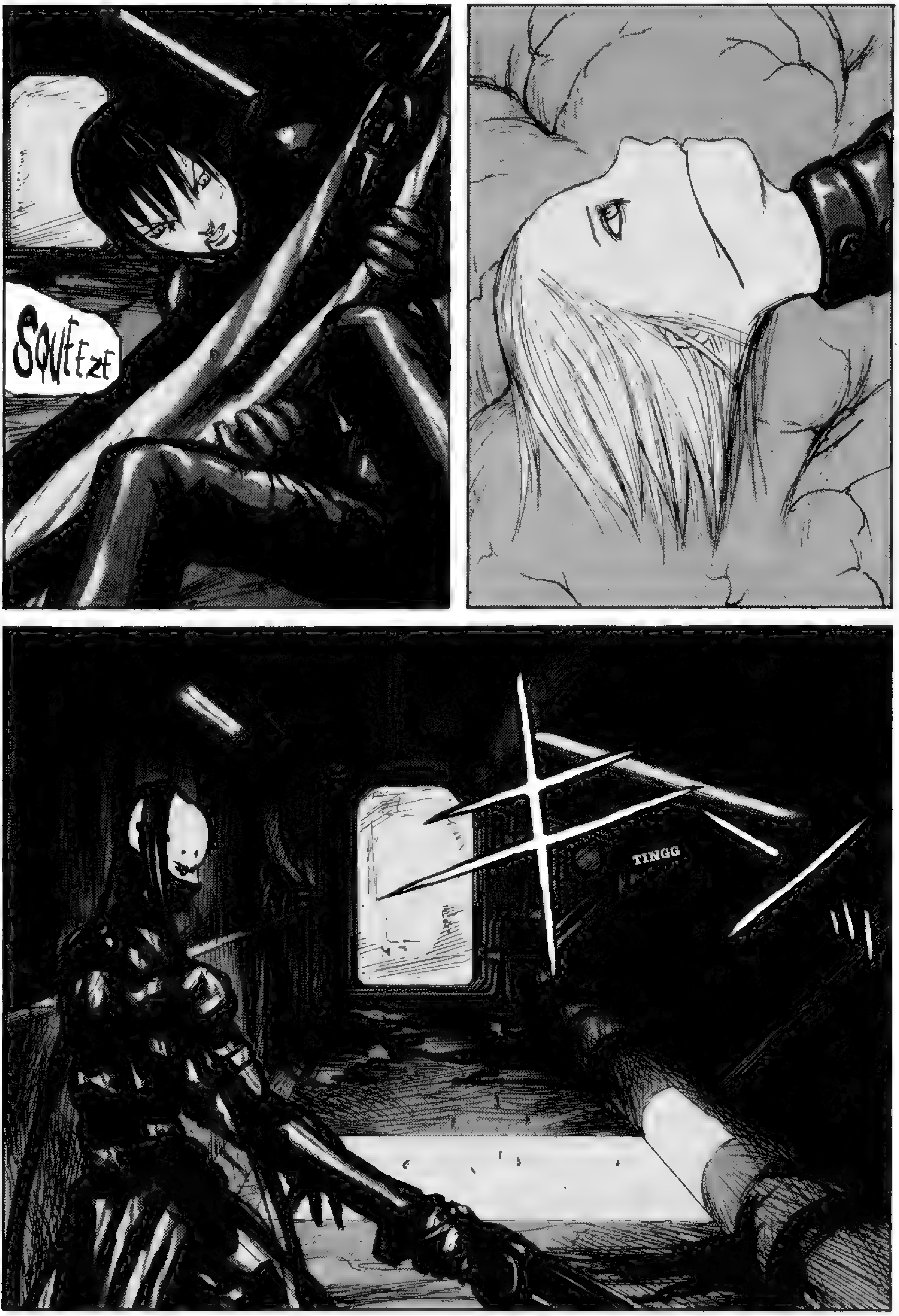
WHOOSH

TINGG

ド
CRUNCH
FLICK
ゴ

CRRUNCH

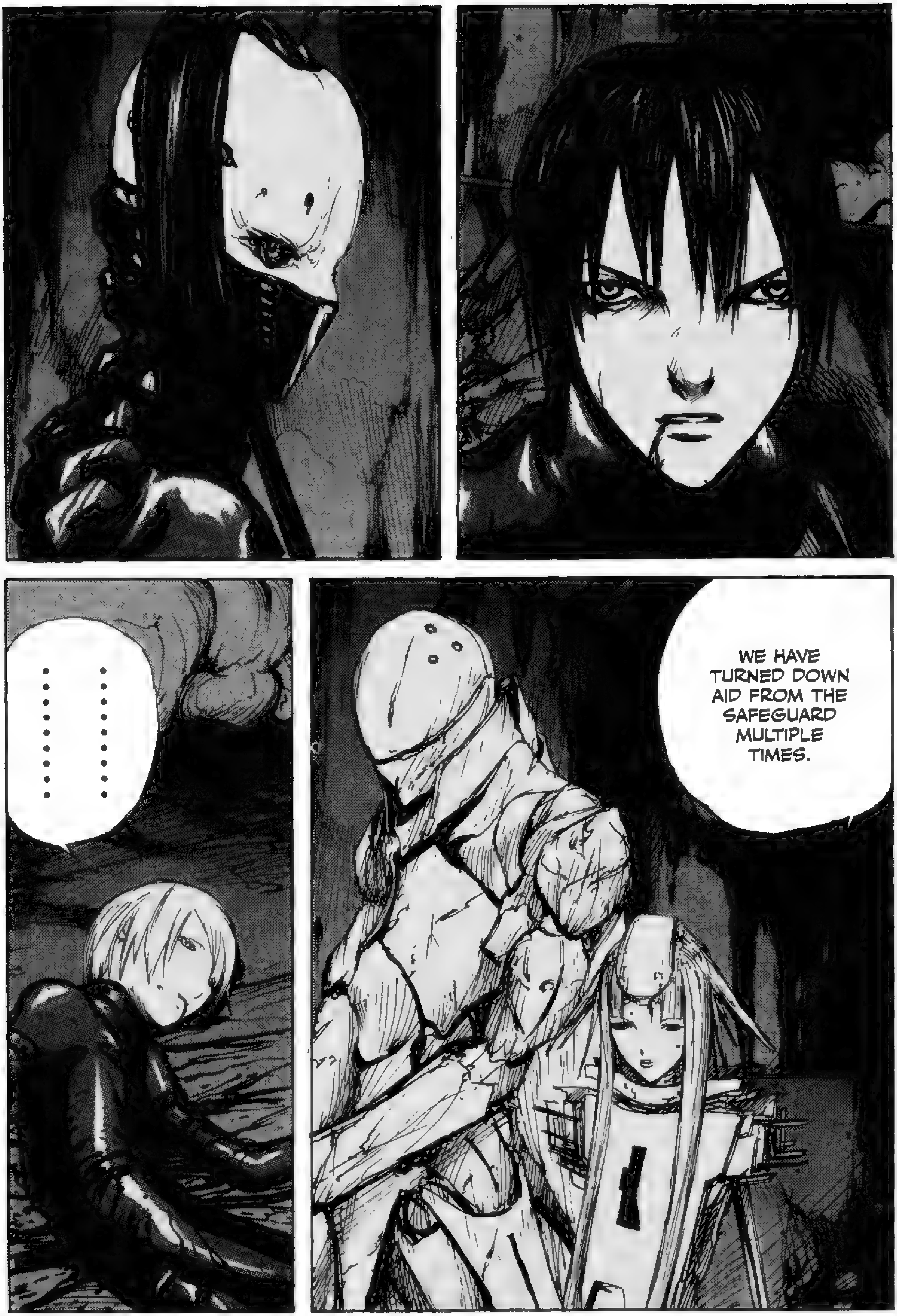
SKRSHH
THWUK


SQUEEZE
TINGG

GU-KING
THEY'RE COMING!!
SPLATCH
SHIT! WHY NOW?!

WHURRR
SHUMMF

I AM MENSAB, THE WILL OF TOHA HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PLANTERS.
YOU ARE AN AGENT FROM THE NETSPHERE?

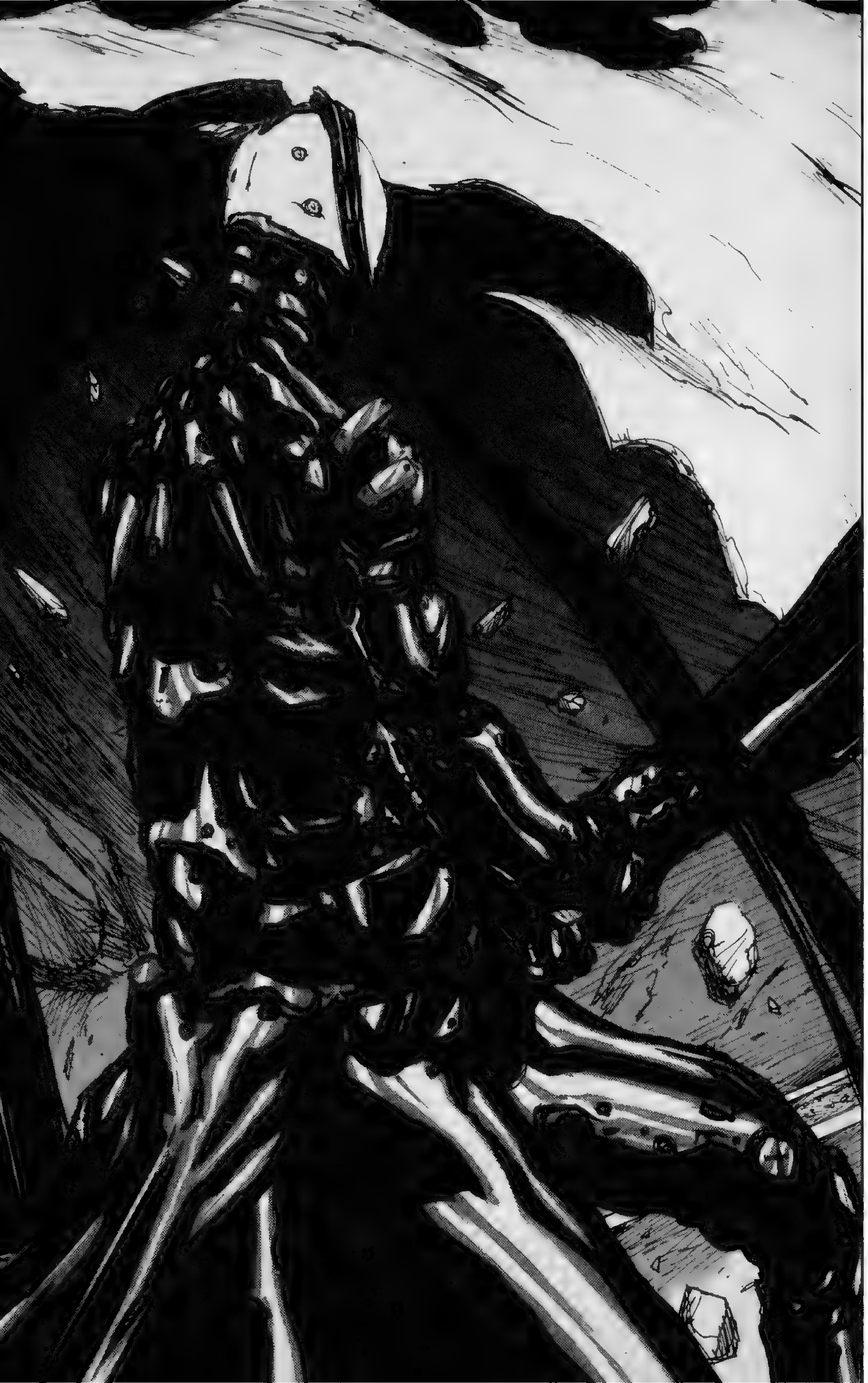

WE HAVE TURNED DOWN AID FROM THE SAFEGUARD MULTIPLE TIMES.
……

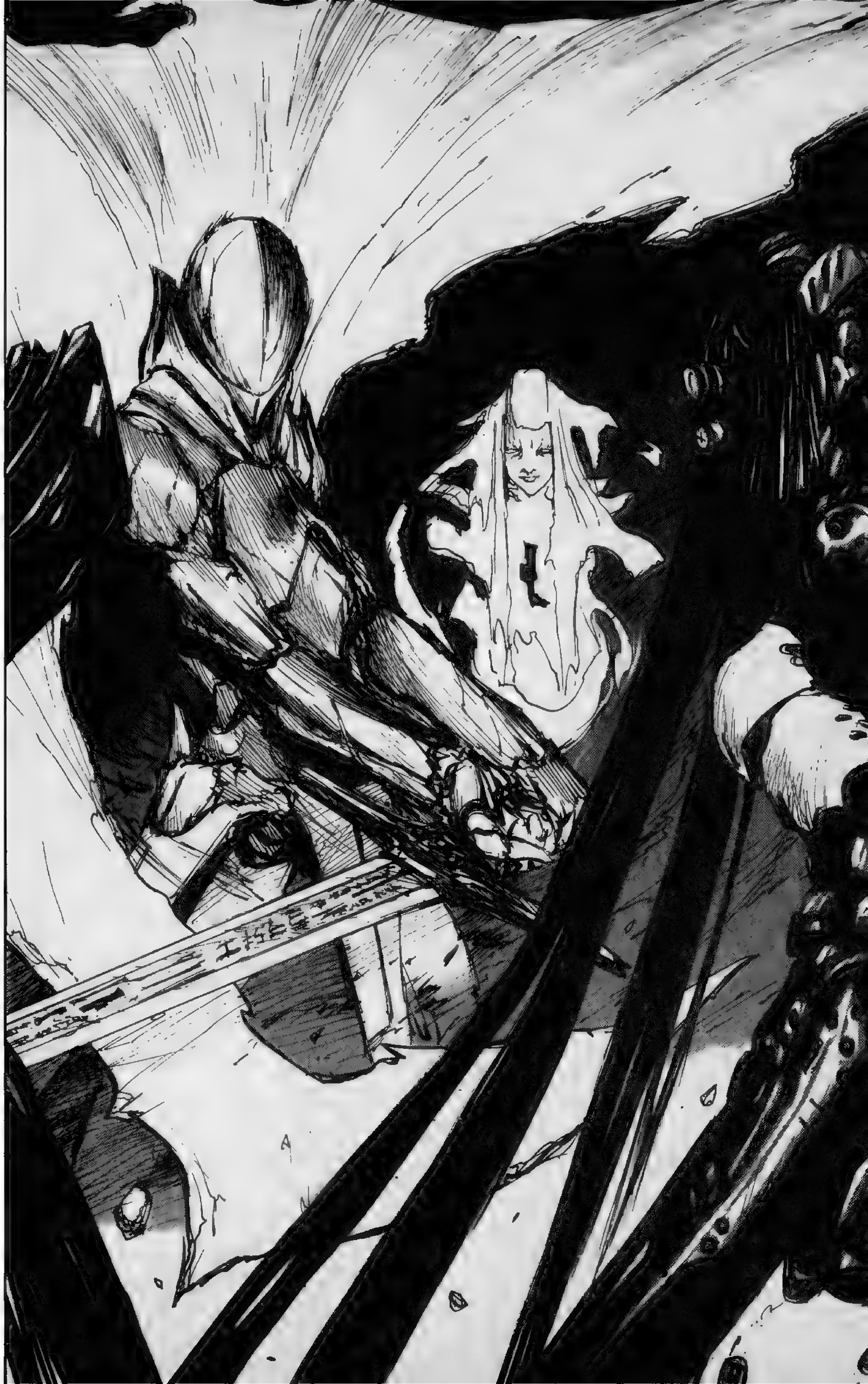
OUR ARRANGEMENT WITH THE AUTHORITY EXPRESSLY FORBIDS ANY KIND OF OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE.
PLEASE LEAVE THIS PLACE AT ONCE.
……
!
FLASH

BOOM
BOOM

……
YOU'VE DONE IT NOW.
I'VE DONE NOTHING OF THE SORT.

THIS ALTERCATION IS POINTLESS, MENSAB.
HAND OVER YOUR RESIDENTS.
SEU, RID US OF THESE INTRUDERS.
TLING



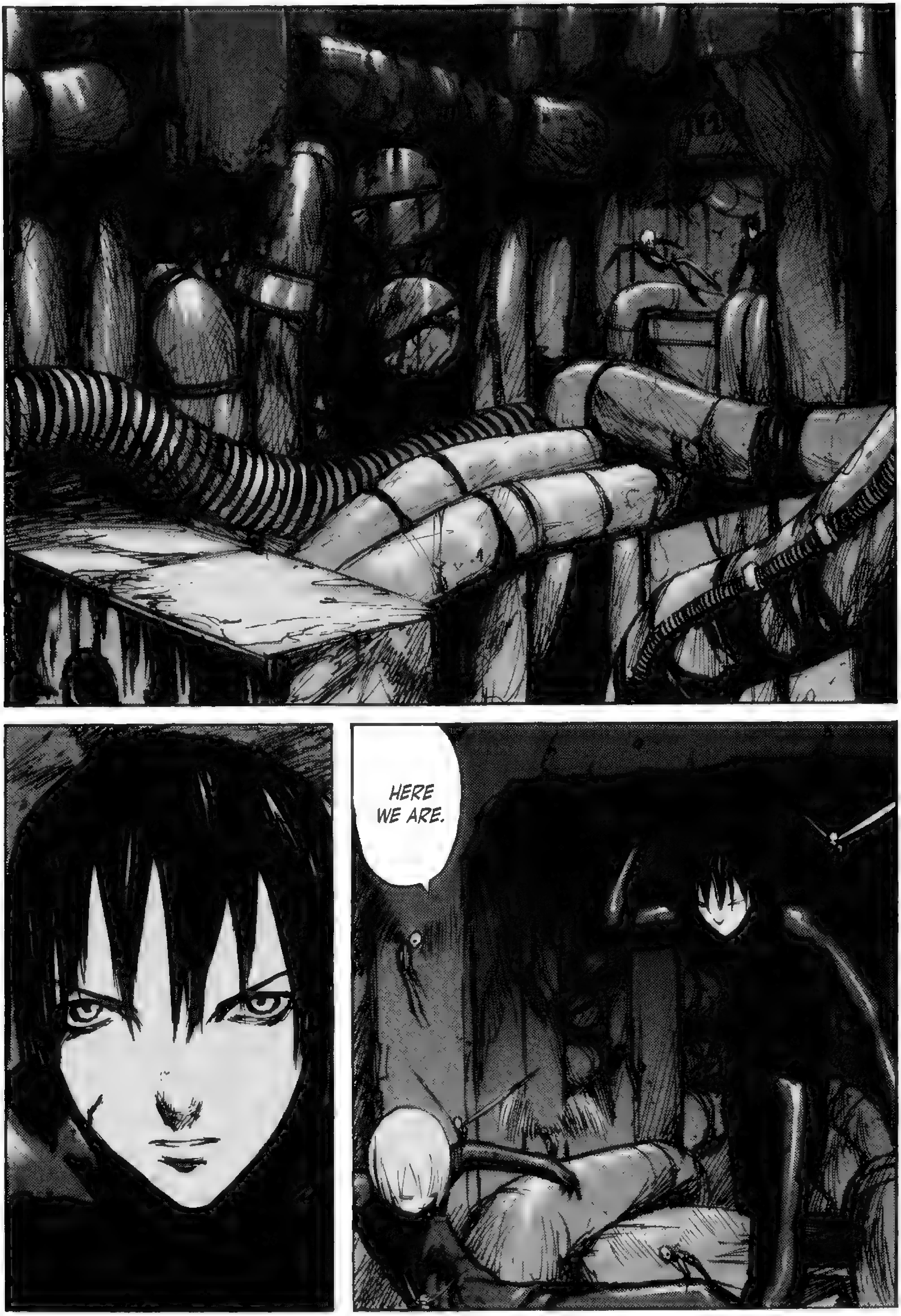


HEY, YOU!!
CLUTCH

CAN HE ACTUALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT WE'RE SAYING?
SURE HE CAN. HE'S LOOKING RIGHT AT US.
YOU CAN MOVE, CAN'T YOU?
....
THIS WAY! HURRY!

IT'S LIKE I'M LIFTING HER ALL BY MYSELF!
OH, WILL YOU SHUT UP!

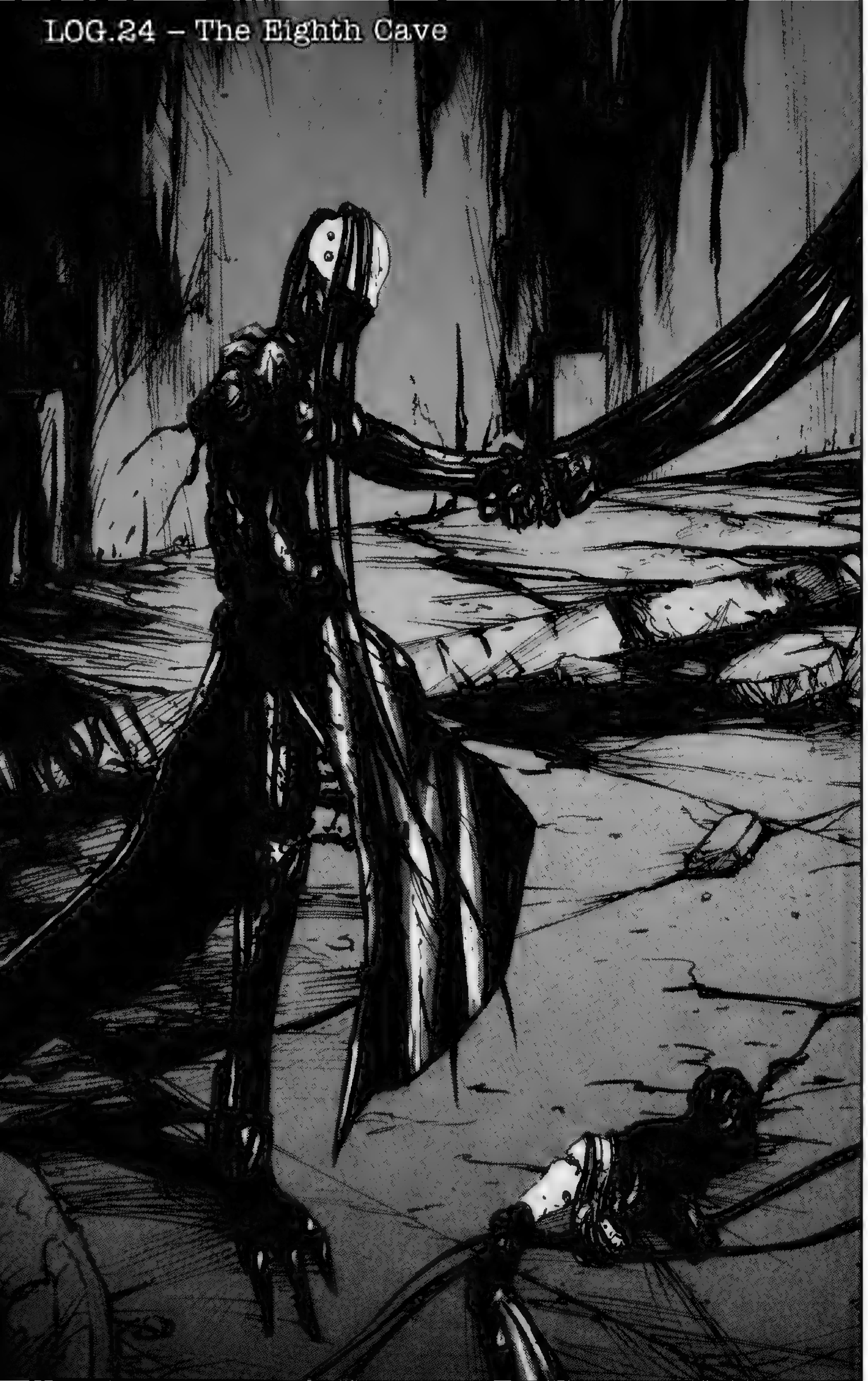
WHAT ABOUT THE OTHERS?
DON'T WORRY, THEY'RE NOT FOLLOWING US.

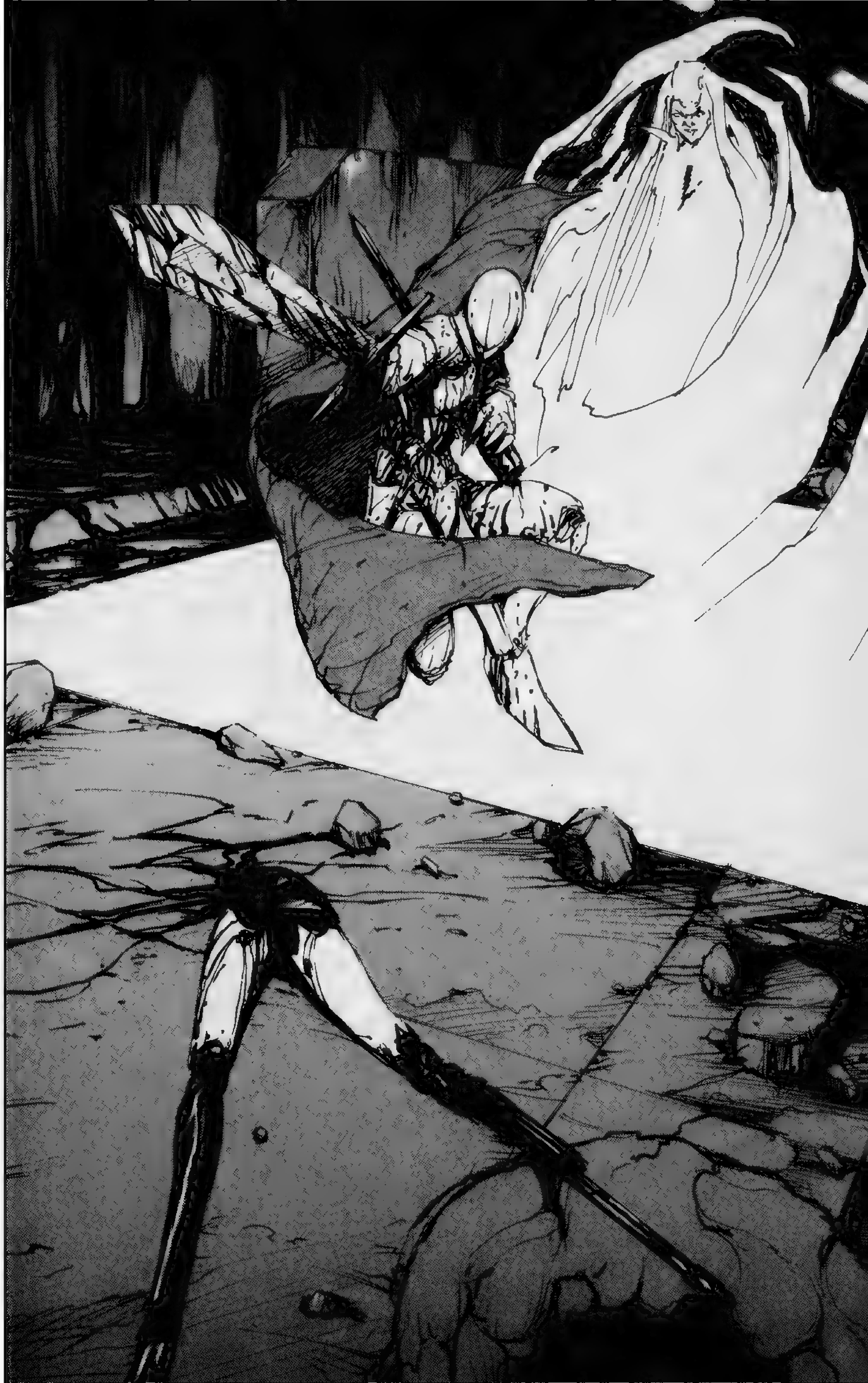

HERE WE ARE.

LOG.23@END

CURSE YOU!

LOG.24 – The Eighth Cave





HURRY UP AND KILL HIM ALREADY, IVY.
STAND BACK, SEU.
BUT LADY MENSAB! I AM NOT YET--

VWUMWUMMM

BWOOMMMM
MEN-SAB !!

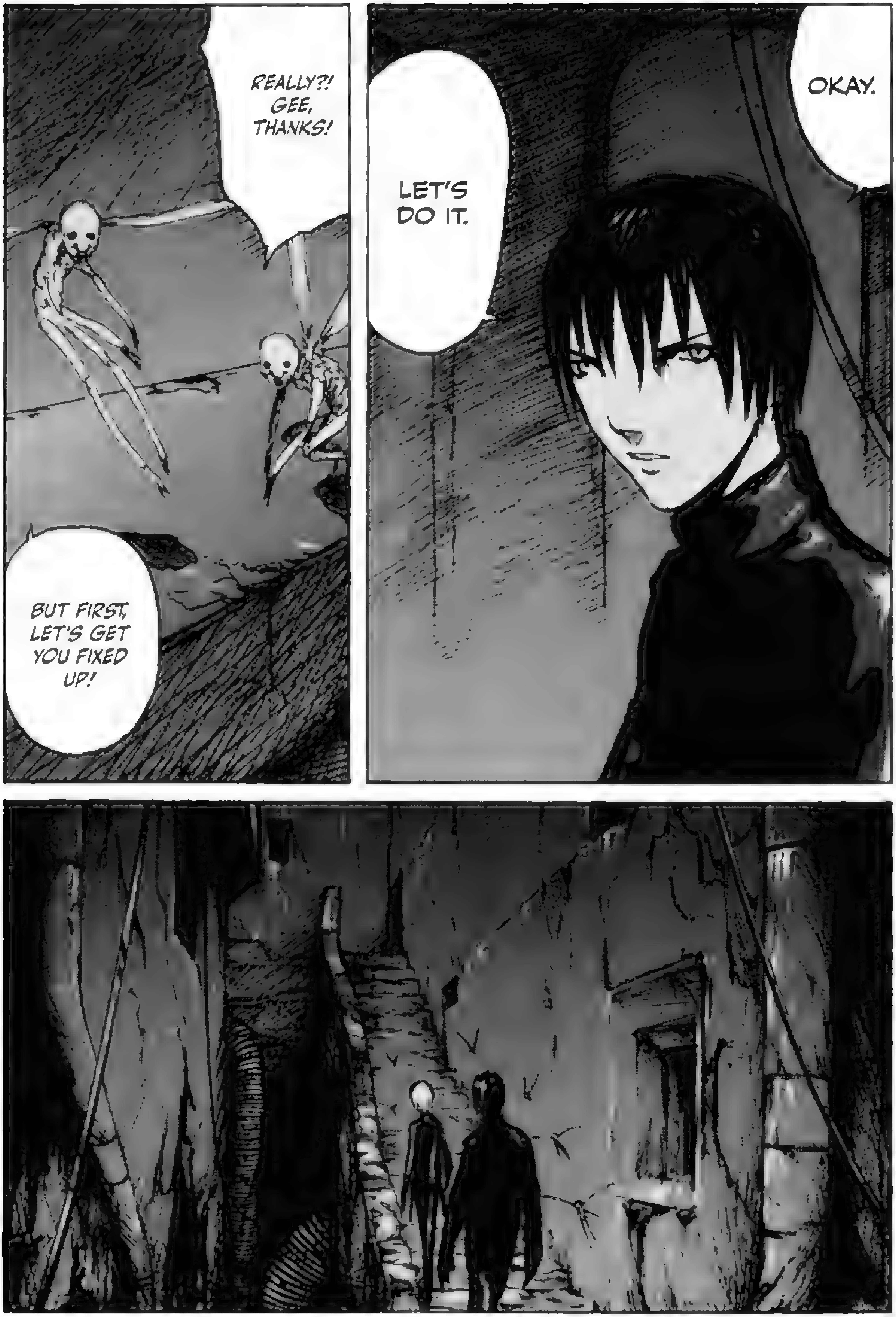
MMM...
?!!
AACK!
CAREFUL, DON'T JERK HER AROUND TOO MUCH!

YOU'RE TALKING THROUGH E.M. WAVES.
WELL, OF COURSE. OUR VOCAL CORDS ARE TOO SMALL FOR US TO HAVE SPOKEN CONVERSATION WITH HUMANS.
IT'S A GOOD THING YOU GUYS CAN PICK UP E.M. WAVES.
I THINK I CAN WALK ON MY OWN. YOU CAN PUT ME DOWN.
KILLY, WHAT'S GOING ON?
LET'S GET INSIDE FIRST.
WE'LL EXPLAIN IT ALL THERE.

THIS FAR IN SHOULD SUIT US FINE.
ARE YOU GONNA BE ALL RIGHT?
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH US?
YOU ARE AGENTS FROM THE NETSPHERE, RIGHT?
DO SOMETHING ABOUT MENSAB.
MENSAB... SHE CLAIMED TO BE...THE WILL OF TOHA... YES?
YEAH. SHE'S REALLY SCARY.
SHE'S GONE NUTS.
IT WAS AFTER THOSE SILICON CREATURES CAME.
THEY SPREAD POISONS.
POISONS THAT RUIN HUMANS.

THEN THERE WERE PEOPLE HERE?
MENSAB HID THEM.
HID THEM?
WHAT *IS* MENSAB?
THE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR THE EIGHTH CAVE.
SHE WAS NICE BEFORE THE SILICON CREATURES INVADED.
I SEE...
SO SHE'S AN A.I., AFTER ALL...

THE EIGHTH...
WAIT, HOW MANY CAVES ARE THERE IN TOHA?
13
13 !!!
AND EACH HAS ITS OWN A.I.?
HAVE THE SILICON CREATURES INFILTRATED ANY OF THE OTHER CAVES?
WE DON'T KNOW.
MENSAB HAS SEALED OFF THE EIGHTH CAVE FROM THE OTHERS.
WE CAN'T MAKE CONTACT WITH ANY OF THE OTHER CAVES.
BUT YOU CAN, RIGHT? YOU'RE AGENTS.
KILLY, IF WE CAN CONTACT A PROPERLY FUNCTIONING A.I., WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO LOCATE A HUMAN WITH NET TERMINAL GENES.


OKAY.
LET'S DO IT.
REALLY?! GEE, THANKS!
BUT FIRST, LET'S GET YOU FIXED UP!

WHAT IS THIS?

HERE'S THE INTERFACE.
IT'S A MACHINE THAT MAKES WHATEVER YOU TELL IT TO.
MENSAB KEEPS IT VERY SAFE.
IT'S OUR JOB TO MAINTAIN THE FACILITY.
I WANT TO TRY.
HOLD ON. YOU CAN'T WORK IT.
LET US DO IT.
……
BIP BIP BIP
CLICK

FFFUNK
GET BACK!
BEEP
BEEP
BWOOSH
BWOOSH

WHAT THE HECK DID YOU TELL IT TO MAKE?
NUTRIENTS EASY FOR ME TO ABSORB.
CRUNK
THIS TECHNOLOGY IS INCREDIBLE.
THIS BODY UNDERWENT A CHEMICAL METAMORPHOSIS BEFORE WE CAME HERE.
I FEEL A LOT BETTER NOW. THANK YOU.

LOOK OUT! MENSAB IS COMING!!
WHAT?!
BUZZZ
WE BETTER GET OUTTA HERE!
SEU?!!
SEU GOT HURT, SO SHE'S GONNA FIX HIM UP HERE!
I NEED ONE MORE THING.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, CIBO?!

ARE THERE ANY PASSAGES NEARBY THAT CONNECT TO ANOTHER CAVE?
THERE'S AN ELEVATOR, BUT IT'S SHUT DOWN!
HURRY!
HURRY!
TAKE US THERE.

SHUNK
IS THERE POWER?
NOT YET.

SHUWA
FLICK
GLUNK
YOU DID IT!
GSHHHH

THIS ELEVATOR WILL TAKE US TO THE SEVENTH CAVE.
BIP
BIP
BIP
WH-WHUM
ゴゴ
IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE ALL CLEAR.
SHWUP

WHY DID WE STOP?!
MENSAB!
SHURU
ACCESS DENIED!
LURCH

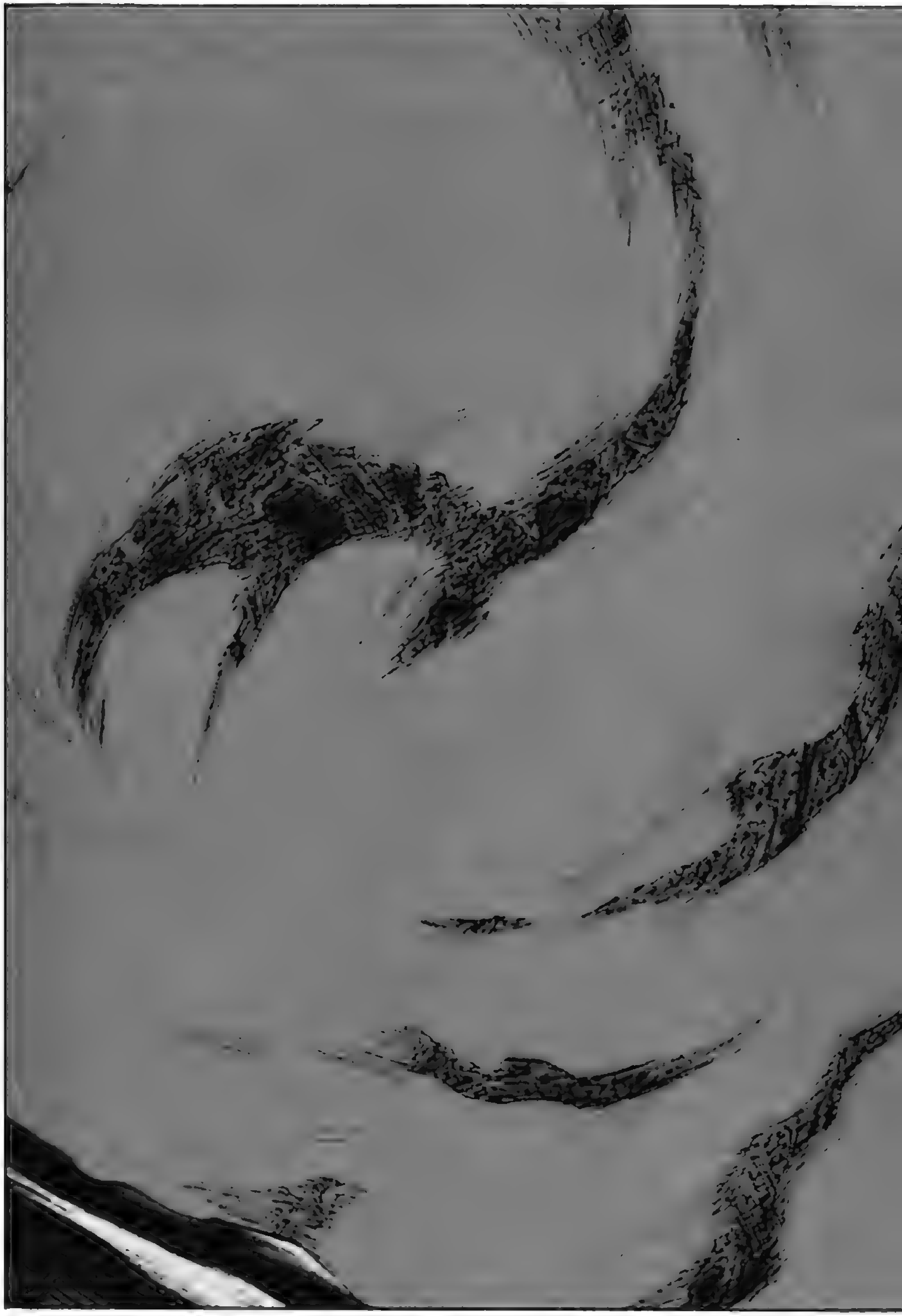
TIC TIC TIC
WE'RE GOING BACK UP?!
BZZT
BZZRT
WHURRR
WE'VE PASSED THE LEVEL WE STARTED ON.
WHERE IS IT TAKING US?!
WE'RE ALMOST BACK IN THE CAVE.

WHOOOSH

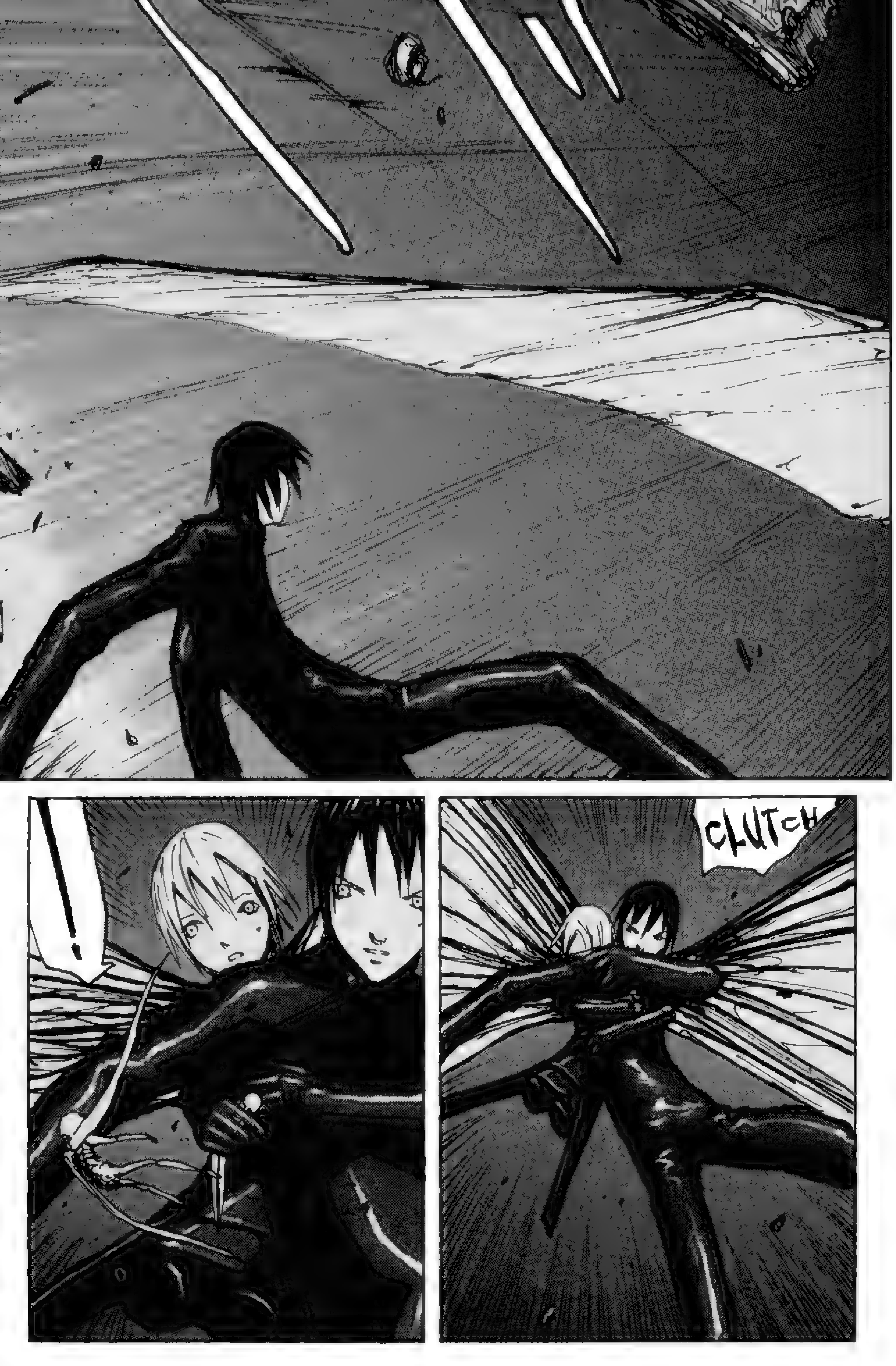
PEOPLE ?!

SILICON CREATURES!
Boof

WE'VE GONE ALL THE WAY THROUGH THE CAVE.
PRETTY SOON WE'LL PASS INTO THE NEXT ONE.
PLOP
!!
THEIR POWER SUPPLY IS CUT...
WE'VE PASSED BEYOND MENSAB'S CONTROL THRESHOLD.
KILLY! IF WE DON'T GET BACK DOWN TO THE EIGHTH CAVE, THEY'LL DIE!
RUMBLE RUMBLE RUMBLE



SLURCH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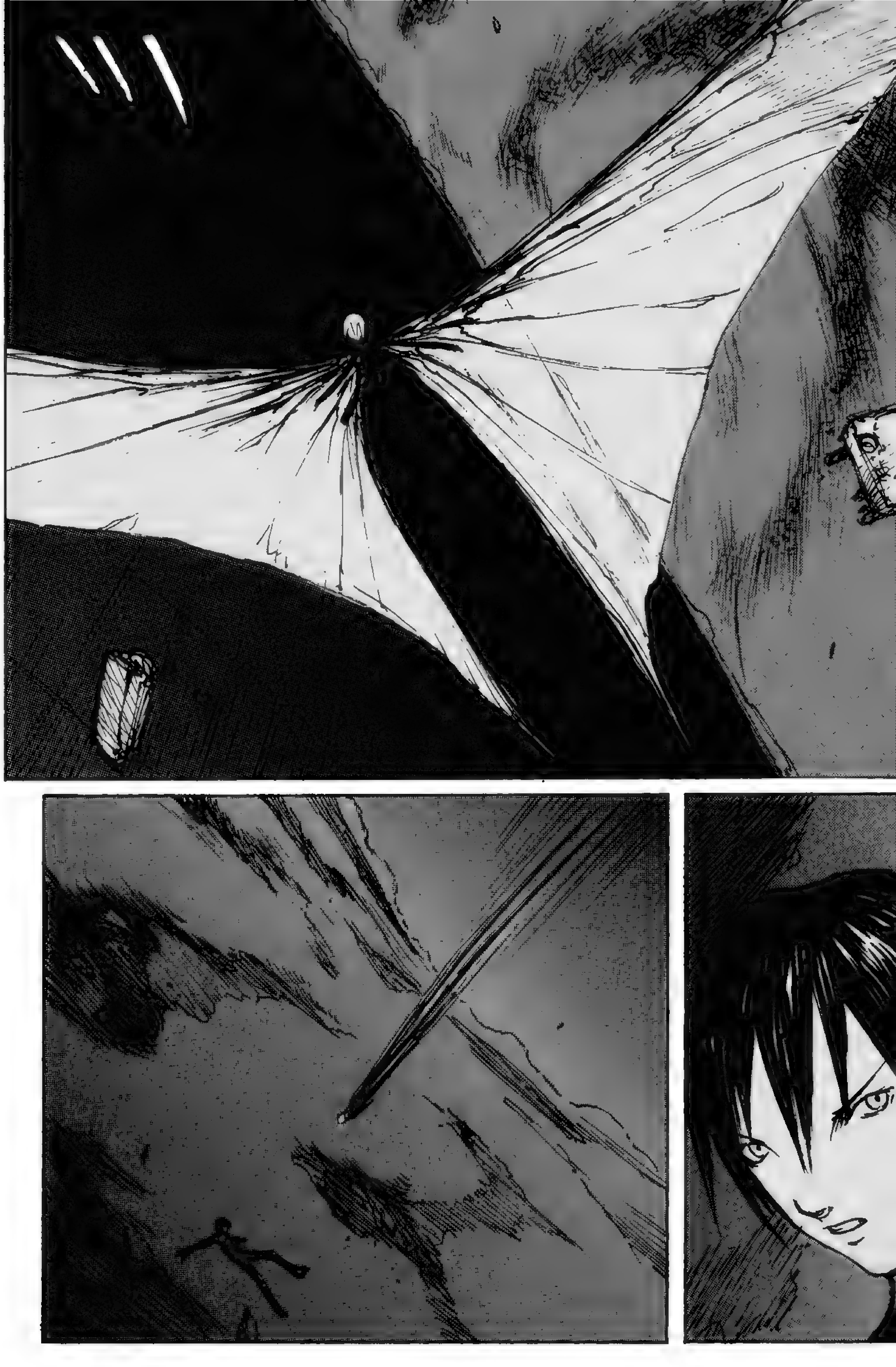
CLUTCH



FWAP
LET'S HEAD BACK.
I WANT TO SEE MENSAB.

BLAME! 4 END

BLAME!

NEXT TIME---

UNABLE TO GET TO ONE OF THE ADJACENT CAVES WITHIN TOHA HEAVY INDUSTRIES, KILLY AND CIBO RETURN TO THE EIGHTH CAVE TO DISCOVER THE SECRET OF WHY THE SILICON CREATURES ARE EVEN IN THE CAVES AND WHY THEY MIGHT BE AFTER MENSAB. BUT WHEN THEY LEARN THAT THEIR WORLD COULD ACTUALLY INCLUDE MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS, THE MYSTERY TAKES ON A NEW IDENTITY.

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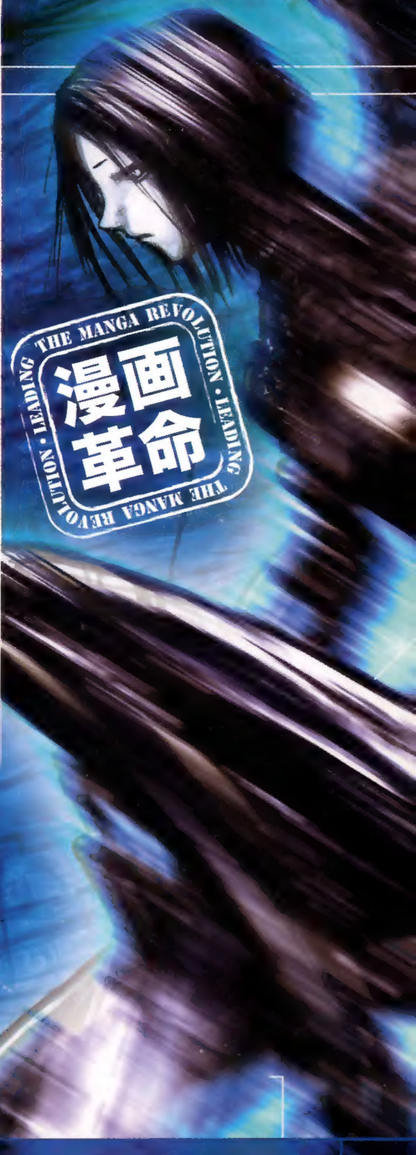
When Cibo's body dies during the battle between the Electrofishers and the Safeguard, her consciousness is teleported to a Backup Cyberspace, where she overloads the program the Safeguard is using to control its troops. But this won't stave off the troops for long. And unless Killy figures out a way to unlock the limiter on his Graviton Beam Emitter, the quest for the Net Terminal Genes might come to a crashing end!



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